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Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez

(Colombia)

Contents

Statement by the Chair

Organization of work

Agenda item 26: Social development

- (a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family
- (b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas

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The meeting was called to order at 10 05 a.m.

Statement by the Chair

1. **The Chair** said that the seventy-first session was beginning at a time that was one of the most challenging in recent history. The urgent nature of many of the issues to be addressed by the Committee had become apparent at the United Nations Summit for Refugees and Migrants, held in September 2016, at which leaders had recognized the pressing need for policies and programmes to address those issues and to protect and support the persons affected.
2. It was clear that the Sustainable Development Goals, together with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement, would guide the Committee's work in the decades ahead. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would require coherent and coordinated support from the United Nations system, and it was essential to strengthen coordination of the efforts of the Main Committees, in particular those of the Second and Third Committees.
3. The resolutions adopted by the Third Committee should reflect Member States' commitment to the realization of all human rights, including the right to development, and should strengthen the progress made in the protection of civil and political rights and the gradual realization of economic, social and cultural rights. The commitment to leave no one behind implied working for all rights for all persons, without discrimination. She would work towards greater cooperation with the bodies and mechanisms of the human rights system, in particular the Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the human rights treaty bodies.
4. She also hoped to advance the Committee's work in the areas of criminal justice and crime prevention, while addressing efforts to combat corruption, the world drugs problem and trafficking in persons. The appointment of a trafficking survivor, Ms. Nadia Murad Basse Taha, as Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, reflected the importance of hearing the voices of the victims and working together with civil society organizations.

5. She considered her election as Chair to be recognition of the progress that Colombia had made in supporting human rights and fundamental freedoms. Her responsibility was of special significance at a time when Colombians were experiencing as never before the exhilaration and challenges of negotiating a peace agreement in the context of an armed conflict that dated back more than 50 years. Peace had been elusive for her country, but Colombians would not lose the momentum or progress achieved over the past six years. The path of peace would always bear fruit.

Organization of work (A/71/250; A/C.3/71/1, A/C.3/71/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/71/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1)

6. **The Chair** said that the letter from the President of the General Assembly concerning the agenda items allocated to the Third Committee was contained in document A/C.3/71/1. The list of documents issued under each agenda item was contained in document A/C.3/70/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1. She drew attention to the guidelines concerning the conduct of the Committee's work set out in the report of the General Committee (A/71/250).
7. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) read out a list of the special procedure mandate-holders and other experts scheduled to make presentations to the Committee at its current session.
8. **The Chair** said she took it that, following past practice, the Committee wished to extend invitations to the special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, the Chairs of treaty bodies or working groups and others to submit their reports to and interact with the Committee.
9. *It was so decided.*
10. **The Chair** said she took it that the Committee wished to approve the organization of work as contained in documents A/C.3/71/L.1/Rev.1 and A/C.3/71/L.1/Add.1/Rev.1, subject to amendment.
11. *It was so decided.*
12. **Mr. Moussa** (Djibouti) said that the agenda of the seventy-first session of the General Assembly had failed to provide for an oral presentation by a representative of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea, as required by paragraph 11 of Human Rights Council resolution 29/18, adopted on 2 July

2015. As plans had apparently already been made for the members of the Commission to travel to New York, it was imperative that the agenda should be amended to correct that omission.

13. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee), recalling that the commission of inquiry had been established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 26/24 of 14 July 2014, said that its mandate had been extended by an additional year by virtue of resolution 29/18 of 2 July 2015. The Human Rights Council had not, however, extended that mandate beyond 1 July 2016 and the Commission was therefore deemed to be defunct. It would be for the Committee to decide whether a representative of a commission no longer in existence could be called upon to appear before it and whether the reporting requirement of Council resolution 29/18 would still be valid after the non-renewal of the relevant mandate. The Commission had been composed of three members: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea and two members appointed by the Council. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur had been extended, and her name appeared on the list that he had just read out to the Committee.

14. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that his delegation concurred with the explanation provided by the Secretariat. As the mandate of the commission of inquiry had not been extended by Human Rights Council resolution 32/24 of 15 July 2016, there was no rationale for the presentation of an oral report. The Council had also decided in July 2016 that a report would be submitted to the Committee by the Special Rapporteur. The recent decisions of the Council superseded any previous decisions of that body. Although, as in previous years, Eritrea opposed country-specific mandates, his delegation would interact with the Special Rapporteur in the context of the Committee.

15. **Mr. Moussa** (Djibouti) said that he had taken note of the Secretariat's remarks but did not share its views. Human Rights Council resolution 29/18, which had effectively been adopted by consensus, contained an explicit request for the presentation of an update to the General Assembly on the situation of human rights in Eritrea. His delegation could not fathom how the Secretariat could fail to comply with the terms of a resolution that had been adopted by consensus. He

urged the Secretariat to do all in its power to rectify that omission and include the item on the agenda.

16. **The Chair** proposed that the Committee should authorize her to seek legal counsel from the Office of Legal Affairs on the issue raised by the delegation of Djibouti.

17. *It was so decided.*

18. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) sought clarification from the Chair as to how the question to be referred to the Office of Legal Affairs would be framed and suggested that the Committee should discuss the matter.

Agenda item 26: Social development (A/71/188)

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (A/71/61-E/2016/7 and A/71/214)

(b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (A/71/177)

19. **Mr. Wu Hongbo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Committee was working on key issues relating to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and would therefore consider the broad spectrum of social progress and the follow-up and review of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. Through its work, the Committee would provide critical guidance for social justice and effective social policies in support of rights for all. Transformative leadership and national ownership of the 2030 Agenda would be required to achieve the Goals, which must be implemented in their entirety. Institutions must be strengthened and made more transparent and inclusive. Policy coherence and integration were also essential. Global engagement and partnership should be raised to new heights.

20. Significant progress had been achieved in human well-being in the previous two decades, with more than 1 billion people escaping extreme poverty and significant reductions in hunger and malnutrition, as well as in child and maternal mortality. Improvements had been noted in school enrolment, the provision of essential health services and in gender equality and women's empowerment. Those gains were, however, uneven and fragile with extreme poverty remaining

stubbornly high in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, and increased inequalities and unemployment in developed countries. Help was needed to reduce the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Women and children, along with persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, suffered disproportionately.

21. The exclusion, inequality, conflict and unsustainability characteristic of past patterns of production and consumption must be replaced by a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable course of human development. A United Nations system-wide action plan designed to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had been finalized in October 2015 and would help to reduce the vulnerability of those peoples. The year 2016 also marked the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Third Committee would have the opportunity to lead the way in showcasing how social, economic and infrastructural policies could ensure that no one was left behind. Strong economies or attempts to correct market and institutional failures or protect poor households temporarily were not enough. The Third Committee, together with the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions and advisory bodies, in particular the Commission for Social Development and Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues could play a leading role in ensuring a people-centred approach.

22. **Ms. Bas** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development) introduced three reports of the Secretary-General and one note by the Secretariat under agenda item 26(a). Referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the realization of internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities (A/71/214), she said that the positive progress achieved had been recognized, but it had been concluded that further efforts were needed to ensure that the Agenda took disability issues into account at the implementation, review, monitoring and evaluation phases.

23. The note by the Secretariat on the World Social Situation 2016 (A/71/188) provided an overview of the *Report on the World Social Situation 2016*. The Report examined patterns of social exclusion, paying close attention to the links among exclusion, poverty and employment.

24. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes (A/71/61-E/2016/7) contained a review of recent policy initiatives taken by Member States. Attention was drawn to the need to change cultural and social norms that perpetuated family violence.

25. **Mr. Ilapavuluri** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) introduced the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas and education for democracy" (A/71/177). The report outlined various coordinating and catalysing actions along five strategic axes carried out by UNESCO in the area of literacy promotion since the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

26. **Ms. Vangansuren** (Mongolia) asked whether the representative of UNESCO could elaborate further on the activities and future plans of the Global Alliance for Literacy.

27. **Mr. Ilapavuluri** (UNESCO) said that when the literacy decade (2003-2012) had ended, there had been deliberations on how to address the fact that 750 million people worldwide were not able to read or write, and 250 million children were leaving school without attaining an appropriate level of literacy. The Global Alliance for Literacy had been created in response to the need for new initiatives with the cooperation of all stakeholders, as literacy was the foundation for sustainable development. States were encouraged to strengthen institutions so that everyone could attain functional literacy skills. Information and communications technology, such as online courses and applications, had untapped potential, and the Alliance would try to stimulate that hidden potential with an intersectoral approach. Literacy was connected to health, agriculture and other sustainable development domains, and if a common sense of purpose and direction were present, tangible progress could be made by the year 2030.

28. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) said that Algeria had been devoting particular attention to social development programmes for poverty alleviation, housing, literacy and health care. The social housing programme had been under way for several years in

Algiers, which had become the first African capital free of slums, and had been expanded to other cities. Algeria had an unemployment rate of less than 10 per cent, and action had been taken to support other vulnerable groups and provide them with basic amenities and education through policies that were in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

29. Anti-poverty summits had been taking place since 1970, but poverty had in fact continued to grow. The international community had been too focused on slogans as opposed to action. The concern was that many States that had not yet attained the Millennium Development Goals did not possess the necessary financial or technical resources to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. Although much had been said about inclusiveness, integration, education, strengthening institutions, gender equality and fighting poverty, little had been said about how to achieve those goals.

30. **Ms. Bas** (Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development) said that a focus on economic issues was not enough; work in the economic and social domains had to be coordinated. The Second and Third Committees should perhaps work together on such issues. The Commission for Social Development, which had convened its most recent session in February 2016, should be the primary platform for discussion of how to implement change. Although financial constraints had an impact, it was possible to use the resources that organizations already had at their disposal. For example, constructing new buildings that were accessible to persons with disabilities would help children with disabilities at no extra cost. That was merely one example, but similar solutions to other problems could be found through concerted efforts.

31. **Mr. Plasai** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that 2016 was an important year for social development, following the adoption in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. In addition, at the 2016 session of the Commission on Social Development, Member States had supported the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and had reinvigorated their commitments to progress on

eradicating poverty and promoting full employment and social integration, in order to leave no one behind.

32. Poverty eradication and social exclusion remained challenges in many parts of the world, and growing inequalities and decent-work deficits had a negative impact on families, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities. National Governments should therefore strengthen their efforts to promote and protect the needs of the most vulnerable in society. There was also concern regarding uneven progress in fulfilling all the interrelated commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development as well as concern regarding the persistent global crises of food insecurity, youth unemployment, climate change, global health threats, violent extremism, terrorism, humanitarian crises and corruption. While each country faced its own specific challenges, the challenges faced by African States, least developed States, small island developing States and States in conflict situations needed special attention.

33. Member States must fulfil their obligations under international law to remove obstacles to the full realization of the rights of peoples to self-determination, in particular those living under colonial and foreign occupation and other forms of alien domination. At the same time, international cooperation was crucial to achieving internationally agreed development goals and promoting the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. There was a need for a stronger, more coherent and more integrated development approach, and it was imperative that the developed States fulfil their commitments regarding internationally agreed official development assistance.

34. The observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 had provided an opportunity to strengthen national family-centred policies and programmes. The implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was key to finding better responses to the new realities of ageing populations. Regional developments to strengthen cooperation and legal frameworks for the promotion, protection and full enjoyment of the human rights and well-being of older persons included the ASEAN Plus Three Statement on Active Ageing, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa and the

Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons.

35. **Ms. Yparraguirre** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that 2015 had been a landmark year, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the formal establishment of the ASEAN Community. The next phase of that establishment would be guided by the ASEAN Vision 2025 and by a new 10-year blueprint for the political-security, economic and sociocultural community pillars. There was a firm commitment to ensuring that the Community was inclusive, sustainable, resilient and dynamic and that its peoples would enjoy a higher quality of life, equal opportunities and a sustainable environment, as well as an enhanced capacity to adapt and respond to threats, innovate and contribute proactively to the global community.

36. At the ninth ASEAN ministerial meeting on social welfare and development on 29 September 2016, which had focused on children, persons with disabilities and older persons, the new ASEAN Framework on Social Welfare and Development 2016-2020 had been adopted. ASEAN had also continued to implement the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection, whose aim was to achieve sustainable and equitable growth by, for example, expanding social insurance to the informal sector and strengthening social assistance programmes for vulnerable groups.

37. In November 2015, ASEAN had adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing and had organized a number of events aimed at sharing policy advice on ways to enhance institutional capacity to care for older persons. With regard to persons with disabilities, several programmes had been developed as a result of conferences and workshops organized over the previous 12 months.

38. ASEAN had continued to engage with civil society partners on social development. The fifth ASEAN Social Work Consortium Conference in August 2016 had looked at training needs for social workers in the region. ASEAN had also held a dialogue with NGOs during the tenth ASEAN GO-NGO Forum on Social Welfare and Development.

39. In October 2015, ASEAN had adopted the Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and

Poverty Eradication 2016-2020. The plan had identified a number of priority areas, including rural economic growth and the development of infrastructure and human resources in rural and peri-urban areas. Through the framework action plan, ASEAN was able to help the poor and other vulnerable groups participate fully in socioeconomic opportunities and gain access to social protection.

40. ASEAN would celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 2017. Over the course of the previous five decades, it had been proactive in its efforts to include the disadvantaged and vulnerable members of its societies. ASEAN remained committed to achieving an inclusive and harmonious community that promoted the well-being and livelihoods of all ASEAN peoples.

41. **Mr. Martins** (Angola), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the many challenges to social development across the globe served as a warning that the world must protect its collective interests if it was to succeed in ending poverty and in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

42. African States had continued to register acceptable rates of economic growth and improvements in the social and economic development. However, the region still had the lowest social development indicators, one of the highest levels of income inequality, and disparities in the attainment of many of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The African Union had adopted Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and several policy frameworks and action plans designed to address inequality.

43. Youth development and empowerment were central to Africa's development agenda. In order to capitalize on the demographic dividend offered by the bulge in the region's youth population, the African Union had made investment in youth one of its core priorities in order to build resilience and address the root causes of challenges such as inequality, forced migration and violent extremism.

44. Despite the efforts of member States to implement the Continental Plan of Action for the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities 1999-2009, only a small proportion of persons with

disabilities in Africa had access to care, rehabilitation and education. Disability still represented a threat to survival in Africa and a strong social protection system was essential. As equal access to employment, education, health care, housing and public infrastructure was the key to economic empowerment, the African Group called on Member States and the international community to work together on disability and do more to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

45. The African Union had adopted the African Union Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, which required all its member States to develop policies on ageing and guided national policymaking. The African Group would remain actively engaged in all relevant multilateral processes to protect and promote the rights of older persons. The family remained the nucleus of African societies; it played a critical role in knitting together the social fabric and was central to development. In July 2004, the African Union had adopted the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa.

46. Despite the progress made, Africa still faced many challenges in protecting and supporting families owing to widespread poverty. African leaders were struggling to deliver on their social development commitments owing to the economic slowdown, the food crisis, climate change, conflicts, malaria, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the Ebola crisis, but remained resolved to achieve the targets set. The Group welcomed the support of the international community in tackling the Ebola outbreak and urged its partners to follow through on their pledges to assist the countries still suffering the effects of the crisis. The New Partnership for Africa's Development had played a key role in supporting development.

47. Lastly, the African Group was committed to furthering social development and inclusion and believed strongly that no one should be left behind. It was therefore vital to address inequality and ensure that international trade provided equal opportunities to participate in global markets. Social development was the primary responsibility of Governments but international cooperation and assistance would also be needed to achieve the goals that had been set.

48. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and

Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the Community was committed to the attainment of social inclusion and integration, hunger and poverty eradication, the right to full and productive employment, and dignified and decent work for all. The eradication of poverty and hunger was an ethical, social and economic challenge and the provision of basic social services was a key instrument that would also address exclusion and promote social integration.

49. Education was the most important public good for achieving sustainable development and for ensuring better opportunities in a globalized world. Social inclusion in good-quality education at all levels was essential to the eradication of poverty and inequality. A number of CELAC countries had established quotas that would promote the inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

50. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development continued to be a key reference for social development, and the international community should step up its efforts to implement those instruments. International cooperation, including official development assistance, South-South and triangular cooperation and other forms of technical assistance were essential to social development. It was also critical to undertake necessary global financial and economic system reform.

51. The States members of CELAC attached the greatest importance to all social development issues, and they had demonstrated what could be achieved with limited resources through their programmes to promote social inclusion and empower vulnerable groups. CELAC was committed to promoting the inclusive economic growth, social progress and sustainable development of its members through national plans, programmes and policies with quantifiable goals that aimed to achieve universal enjoyment of all human rights, giving priority to people living in extreme poverty and other vulnerable groups. It was also vital to strengthen statistical capacity in order to measure progress and inform decision-making and policymaking.

52. The Community actively promoted the full social, political, economic and cultural inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities. It also

recognized that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a fundamental human rights and development instrument. CELAC welcomed the work of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities as well as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility. Given the scope of the challenge, it was clear that the concerns of such groups should be integrated into all public policies and programmes, especially sustainable development and poverty eradication strategies. Disability should therefore be considered within the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

53. Alarming, a high percentage of young people were neither in school nor in paid work. As they made up a large proportion of the population, it was essential to offer them education and training opportunities in order to ensure their full inclusion and participation in society.

54. It was a matter of concern that the population aged over 60 years was projected to grow by 56 per cent between 2015 and 2030. The inclusion of older persons should be promoted through broad social strategies and greater attention should be paid to population ageing by the international community. The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Rights of Older Persons, adopted in June 2015, was the first legally binding instrument to address the human rights of older persons. CELAC recognized the deliberations that had taken place in the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and urged the Group to consider launching negotiations for an international convention for the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons. CELAC welcomed the work of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons and awaited with interest the publication of her report in September 2016.

55. Families played in a key role in social development, and addressing their specific needs and challenges would be crucial to the elimination of discrimination and exclusion, and to the achievement of social development, sustainable development and improved living conditions. Lastly, social issues were not only a matter for the social sphere; they were also affected by economics, politics and the environment.

56. **Mr. Rahming** (Bahamas), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that

CARICOM was a strong proponent of instruments, including the 2030 Agenda, that recognized that people needed the opportunity to grow, develop their skills and contribute to their families and communities in a meaningful way, and that healthy, well-educated and well-trained persons were better equipped to meet their basic needs and achieve success. Social development required investment in people to enable them to reach their full potential. The Caribbean Community had been working with Member States, regional and international partners and community organizations on initiatives to help individuals to realize their potential through, *inter alia*, youth development, investment in education and the mainstreaming of the Community's disabilities agenda.

57. As more than 60 per cent of the Caribbean population was under 30 years of age, young people were considered vital assets with the capacity to act as agents of social change. The Youth Development Action Plan 2012-2017 empowered young people to realize their potential through youth entrepreneurship, leadership training and the engagement of at-risk youths.

58. Education was a key driver of sustainable development and could potentially build resilience to vulnerability, particularly in small States. Investment in education was tantamount to investment in the future. Through its education subprogramme, the Community was committed to enabling people to work for a better quality of life, and to providing the region with the knowledge and skills required for it to compete in the global environment of the twenty-first century. Although CARICOM was proud of its educational gains, such as the achievement of almost universal access to primary and secondary education and increased tertiary educational opportunities, levels of crime and violence threatened to undermine those gains, especially as high levels of unemployment, underemployment and skills gaps were causing concern.

59. CARICOM looked forward to the launch of the new Caribbean Development Bank Education and Training Policy and Strategy towards the end of 2016. The new educational development agenda incorporated inputs from key Caribbean stakeholders and would focus on disparities within the region's education systems, helping Caribbean countries to achieve

positive learning outcomes and contributing to the formation of high-quality knowledge-based economies.

60. Persons with disabilities in the Caribbean Community continued to be highly vulnerable, potentially subject to abuse, neglect, social marginalization and extreme poverty. In the Declaration of Pétion Ville, an outcome of the CARICOM High-Level Ministerial Meeting on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held in Haiti in December 2013, the Community's member States had reasserted the region's political commitment to ensuring that societies were inclusive. They had called for the appointment of a CARICOM rapporteur on disability, who would promote modern international standards of care and treatment, positive changes in attitudes, perception and behaviour and assistance in the development of laws and services for the protection and advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities. The upcoming commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would be an opportune moment to set the region on a more inclusive track.

61. **Mr. Whiteley** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that Europe was currently implementing the 2030 Agenda in its internal and external policies. The founding treaty of the European Union noted the determination of its member States to promote economic and social progress for its peoples, taking into account the principle of sustainable development. Despite considerable progress and an improved economic situation, however, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda still presented challenges. Long-term unemployment, poverty, inequality and inadequate levels of social cohesion and social inclusion were particularly acute problems.

62. Economic progress should go hand-in-hand with improvements to people's lives, but to achieve that, investment and reforms were crucial. The Union had a €300 billion investment plan to stimulate the economy and thereby create jobs. It would also intensify its efforts to combat segmentation of the labour market and undeclared work, shift the tax burden away from

the labour force, modernize pension systems and other social protection systems and invest in skills to improve the employability of young people and the long-term unemployed. The youth unemployment rate had dropped substantially since 2013, and its further reduction remained a top priority for the European Union. The European Union Youth Guarantee had yielded encouraging results across all Member States. Under the initiative, all young people received a quality job offer, traineeship, apprenticeship or the chance to continue their education within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. Over the previous two years, bold structural reforms at the national level had led to improved public employment services, incentives to stimulate job creation, and measures to improve vocational education and training systems.

63. Governments should take steps to address age discrimination and ensure that older persons were able to access decent work, adequate pensions, health care, long-term care and protection against elder abuse. The European Union was committed to continuing to explore how the human rights of older persons could best be strengthened in ageing societies, as exemplified by its active role and input in the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. Persons with disabilities continued to be disproportionately affected by unemployment and underrepresented in tertiary education within member States. The Union would continue to mainstream disability issues in its actions to combat unemployment and work towards their full and equal participation in society. It welcomed the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD/C/EU.CO/1), the result of the first ever dialogue on the European Union implementation of an international human rights treaty. The recommendations, together with the input of representative organizations of persons with disabilities, were feeding into the preparations of the progress report on the implementation of the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

64. The European Union promoted gender equality in all of its policies and activities. Specifically, it was working to increase the rate of women's employment, address the gender gap in pay, ensure a better balance between work and family life, combat occupational segregation, ensure the availability of affordable and

high-quality child care and combat violence against women. It welcomed the pledges made by States and regional organizations to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action expressed at the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, as well as the gender-related Sustainable Development Goals. The European Union fully supported the fight against violence and discrimination against women, as stated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

65. Given the importance of family-related issues, it was developing a number of important actions addressing parental leave, the balance between family and work life, the living conditions of vulnerable families and domestic violence. The European Platform for Investing in Children had been established to promote child and family policy evaluation and the exchange of good practices. In 2013, the European Commission had adopted a recommendation urging Member States to increase efforts to tackle child poverty and social exclusion and promote children's well-being. In 2016, the Union had provided Member States with country-specific recommendations on child poverty, well-being and work-life balance.

66. There was, however, no room for complacency. Although labour market resilience was growing in the European Union, divergences in employment and social outcomes across Member States persisted, in particular within the euro area. The Union had launched a public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights in order to identify principles to support well-functioning labour markets and welfare systems, including through renewed convergence within the euro area. A better understanding of new trends in work patterns and societies would make the European model more future-proof.

67. **Mr. Aboulatta** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Family in New York, said that the Group believed that the family was the natural and fundamental core unit of society with primary responsibility for nurturing and protecting children and acting as the guardian and protector of women, older persons and persons with disabilities. A healthy family environment could not be achieved without the total engagement of the State and society to protect the family. The family unit also was the centre of the

education of children and young persons and its role could not be substituted by any alternative. In addition, it played a key role in social development, social cohesion and integration and was the primary agent of socialization and integration of its members into society. In compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Member States and the United Nations system should provide all possible support to protect and strengthen the institution of the family, in particular for families with children. All cultures and traditions respected the family as the main unit of society and the guardian of the rights of the child, and Member States should give special attention to family issues in accordance with their own national laws, traditions and religious backgrounds.

68. The Group urged the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and its focal point on the family to be more active in raising the international community's awareness of the importance of the family for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the objectives of the International Year of the Family. Member States should in particular consider family-oriented policies and programmes in their implementation of Goals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

69. Speaking in his national capacity, he said that 2016 marked thirty years since the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, and it had also witnessed the first stage of measures taken by Member States towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Both milestones pointed to the fact that development could only be sustainable if it was inclusive.

70. The Egyptian Government was responsible for the promotion and protection of the family, which was defined in the Constitution as the basis of society. The country celebrated the Day of the Family in March every year. A new department of the Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity was strengthening the institutional framework for family and childhood policies. It was implementing projects to prevent child labour, especially in rural areas, and to set up nurseries and care institutions for senior citizens. Moreover, the Government had approved draft laws on young persons and sport and developed a special strategy on youth employment. His Government was also working to establish a national council for senior citizens. A draft law on disability that reflected gains made by persons

with disabilities under the 2014 Constitution and mainstreamed issues affecting them within the country's national sustainable development strategy had been finalized and was currently under review by civil society organizations.

71. Numerous challenges hampered the achievement of social development, including the vicious cycle of poverty and income inequality. Other impediments included acts of terrorism in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel and the continuing occupation of the Arab Territories in Palestine and the Golan Heights. The 2030 Agenda should be implemented in accordance with the national policies and priorities of each Member State, and the social dimension given equal priority with the economic and environmental dimensions.

72. **Mr. Scappini Ricciardi** (Paraguay) said that Member States had embarked on the momentous task of harmonizing their national plans and programmes with the Sustainable Development Goals, with the aim of achieving the Goals in all countries and regions within 15 years. Development would not be sustainable, however, if progress was made only in fits and starts.

73. One of the main tools employed by Paraguay to meet its commitment to leave no one behind was its national development plan, which plan focused on poverty reduction, the promotion of social development, inclusive economic growth and the country's inclusion in global markets. The plan provided for a number of social protection programmes to bolster the livelihoods of those with the least resources, especially women, vulnerable children and adults, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and rural populations. The Tekopora programme, for example, was designed to reduce the intergenerational transmission of poverty and to improve the access of families to health and education, especially in the case of women who were heads of household. The Government was also carrying out a substantial programme of construction of affordable social housing to meet the needs of families with limited economic means.

74. With some 60 per cent of its population under 30 years of age — one of the highest rates in Latin America — Paraguay firmly believed in the ability of young people to transform society. A national

scholarship programme for postgraduate studies abroad and study grants for the teaching of specialist subjects had been introduced across the country in order to boost the country's long-term economic and social development. His delegation reiterated its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, in the belief that the achievement of sustainable development would contribute to more peaceful and socially cohesive societies.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

**General Assembly**

Seventy-first session

Official Records

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Third Committee**Summary record of the 2nd meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 4 October 2016, at 3 p.m.

<i>Chair:</i>	Ms. Mejía Vélez	(Colombia)
<i>later:</i>	Mr. Glossner	(Germany)
<i>later:</i>	Ms. Mejía Vélez	(Colombia)

ContentsAgenda item 28: Social development (*continued*)

- (a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)
- (b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 28: Social development (continued)
(A/71/188)

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (continued) (A/71/61-E/2016/7 and A/71/214)

(b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (continued) (A/71/177)

1. **Ms. AlFassam** (Kuwait) said that, despite measures taken and progress achieved in the follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of development goals for persons with disabilities, many stumbling blocks remained, including data gaps. To protect and support the disabled, Kuwait had established a public authority for disability affairs, one of whose major undertakings was to conduct surveys of disability and establish disability databases. Kuwait provided training, education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, access to sustainable livelihoods and a broad array of services. It would spare no effort to achieve their full inclusion in society, in accordance with Kuwait Vision 2035.

2. In 2016 Kuwait had enacted a law giving older persons the right to a monthly allowance and tax-free health care. Under its laws, orphans must receive a stipend and an education. Indeed, all children in Kuwait, whether girls or boys, citizens or residents, had a right to free education. She called on the international community to shoulder shared responsibility for promoting the welfare of the peoples of the world in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals.

3. **Ms. Huttunen** (Finland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that migrants and refugees were disproportionately young. Underlining the need for better education and employment opportunities for young people, recognized in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/71/L.1), she called for greater emphasis on vocational education and entrepreneurship training. Improved access to education and employment would also help to combat marginalization and radicalization among the young. To increase their sense of inclusion and belonging, they should be able to participate in sports and

hobbies, which built community, and to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes. Young people must be recognized as drivers of positive change.

4. Start-ups and the spirit they embodied had the potential to save the world; indeed, they had already made a significant impact. Largely led by the young, they required investors willing to believe in young entrepreneurs.

5. Narrow-minded nationalism, racism and violent extremism were on the rise. Leaders everywhere should lead by example, condemning all forms of racial discrimination, violence and hate speech. Respect for human rights was fundamental, even and especially in difficult times.

6. **Ms. Joubli** (Switzerland) said that Switzerland had launched a national initiative to improve access to the job market for women and older people. Based on close coordination among business, government and labour as well as between government authorities, it was designed to build skills, facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life, keep older workers on the job longer and combat the labour shortage through innovation.

7. **Mr. Penseyres** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that unemployment, poverty, lack of education and limited prospects made young people susceptible to hate propaganda. To ensure that they could find employment, Switzerland emphasized quality education and on-the-job training. To encourage social inclusion and instil core values and responsibility, it supported extracurricular activities and youth organizations. A solid value system was the best protection against indoctrination. Promoting values such as democracy, civic duty and solidarity among the young should be an international priority.

8. **Ms. Mircheva** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her generation's tremendous potential could be tapped by ensuring equal youth participation at all levels of decision-making. According to a survey conducted by the Bulgarian youth delegates, young people in her country saw a clear correlation between low levels of youth participation and the lack of quality education and jobs. They considered quality education essential for meaningful participation in social and economic life and increasingly appreciated the advantages of non-formal education. She called on Governments to

recognize non-formal education, to develop systems for validating it and to ensure support and funding for its main providers, particularly youth-led and youth organizations.

9. **Ms. Tsoleva** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that vulnerable and marginalized young people were the most likely to be unemployed. As a social entrepreneur working with persons with disabilities, she saw social entrepreneurship as a potential major force for the inclusion of disabled people in the labour market and society as a whole. She called on the international community to promote and support social entrepreneurship among young people, who had the best solutions for issues affecting them directly. Young people could and should be drivers of change at the local, national and global levels.

10. **Ms. Brooke** (United States of America) said that social exclusion had an impact on political empowerment, health outcomes and economic well-being. The United States was committed to eliminating social exclusion and discrimination domestically and through foreign policy. It had worked with others to ensure that recent international agendas and frameworks for development mentioned persons with disabilities, older persons and other often-marginalized groups. It was vitally important to include civil society in discussions of social inclusion, social development and human rights by, inter alia, giving its representatives access to the Third Committee and other United Nations forums.

11. Her Government had worked to promote girls' literacy, which was a stepping stone to further education. Countries with more girls in secondary school tended to have lower maternal and infant mortality rates, lower incidence of HIV/AIDS and better child nutrition.

12. **Ms. Yparraguirre** (Philippines) said that persons with disabilities were an integral part of Philippine society. Her country's Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities, which had preceded the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by more than 10 years, had been amended in March to expand benefits and privileges for the disabled. Other national laws provided for the establishment of a disabilities affairs office in every province, city and municipality, allocated positions for persons with disabilities in all government offices and prohibited the ridicule of such persons. The Philippines' disaster risk management

programme identified persons with disabilities as a vulnerable group needing special attention, and it was aligning its data collection systems with international requirements in order to address the disability data gap.

13. To make the workplace more inclusive, the Philippines had recently enacted a law prohibiting and penalizing age discrimination in employment. It had also strengthened the law promoting the employment of students. The Philippines remained committed to enabling marginalized and vulnerable groups to contribute to and participate in national development.

14. **Mr. Chauhan** (India) said that, despite progress in some parts of the world, millions of people in developing countries had been left behind. Fully realizing human rights for all, including the right of all peoples to development, would require an institutional framework and structural reforms that encompassed all three dimensions of sustainable development.

15. His Government's top priority was to eradicate poverty, especially in rural areas, by empowering vulnerable groups and creating social and physical infrastructure. India was applying transparent electronic governance to the world's largest cash-transfer programme; 50 per cent of its beneficiaries were rural women. It was implementing a scheme to ensure broad access to financial services, and its national identification number project would make it possible to provide financial and other subsidies directly, eliminating the middleman and corruption. Having achieved universal primary education, it was focusing on improving the quality of education, particularly for girls. It was implementing a policy to address the needs of senior citizens and had laws to ensure equal opportunities and social participation for persons with disabilities. Employment generation initiatives targeted young people, and micro-credit and other schemes promoted entrepreneurship among youth, women and other vulnerable groups. A rural sanitation campaign had eliminated open defecation in more than 70,000 villages, and health interventions had improved life expectancy and substantially decreased infant and maternal mortality rates.

16. Nations must stand together to root out terrorism and external threats to peace, because conflict and poverty were intertwined. Equity and unity among nations and respect for diversity were essential for sustainable development.

17. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) said that economic policies could not produce deep and lasting changes without a social inclusion component. Social development should be seen as a transformative process leading to full realization of the economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights of all people and, thus, a society immune from discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices and inequalities.

18. Cognizant of the complexity of poverty and the emergence of new vulnerabilities, his Government had set a goal of zero poverty. It aimed to address the problems of people at every stage of their individual and family lives, from infancy to old age, taking into account differences among regions and historically disadvantaged groups, including women, indigenous peoples, older persons, disabled persons and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons.

19. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico) said that the time had come to make the agenda of the General Assembly more relevant to the needs of Member States and to ensure that the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development worked in harmony. In other words, in the interests of coherence and efficiency, the structure and working methods the United Nations development system must be adapted to reflect the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

20. The Committee needed to make its agenda relevant to the new paradigm. Similarly, the Economic and Social Council should eliminate the Commission for Social Development, which had become irrelevant, and focus on the high-level political forum. As its Independent Team of Advisors had indicated, structural reform was long overdue.

21. Mexico considered economic and social inclusion the key to prosperity, and its national inclusion strategy had had a real impact on the well-being of Mexicans. His delegation was pleased to report that it included four youth delegates, representing Mexico's 37 million young people. On the other hand, older persons would soon constitute 15 per cent of its population. Mexico recognized and protected the rights of the many types of families in its society.

22. **Mr. Vetter** (Austria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the many concerns affecting young people

pointed to the need for youth participation. Numerous countries had recently established organizations or schemes that strengthened the voice of the young. But, too often, young people involuntarily or voluntarily continued to stand on the sidelines of politics and decision-making: involuntarily because of laws made by people who considered experience a prerequisite for positive action, and voluntarily because some young people considered voting irrelevant. Young people had a stake in the future, and short-sighted policies would come at their expense. As a matter of intergenerational equity, the international community should further strengthen the voice of the young on the issues that affected them most. In that connection, he suggested that his fellow youth delegates should urge their countries to lower the voting age to 16, as Austria had done.

23. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that the past 25 years had been marked by meaningful improvements in social development, which had been to a great extent driven by advances in developing countries, including Brazil. However, continued progress would depend on the reaction to challenges such as income inequality and unemployment. The number of poorly paid or precarious jobs had actually risen since 1995. Brazil remained committed to strengthening its social protection network, including its cash-transfer programme, and was continuing to tackle extreme poverty despite the economic downturn. It was also making plans to improve the efficiency and coverage of the health and education systems through public-private partnerships. Thanks to decades of investment in education and family support programmes, it had almost totally eliminated illiteracy among 15-to-19-year olds. His Government considered the rights of people with disabilities a major priority and planned to replicate locally-developed best practices for accessibility and inclusion at the national level. Brazil welcomed the report on implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up process (A/71/61-E/2016/7), as well as the appointment of the first Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

24. Contrary to popular belief, ample academic evidence indicated that migrants had a positive impact on the countries of transit and destination. The migrant and refugee crisis illustrated the interdependence of

social development, human rights and peace. Throughout its deliberations, the Committee should bear in mind that the enormous challenges ahead could be met only through increased cooperation and solidarity.

25. **Ms. Guerra Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that social development remained a chimera for millions of people. Progress on reducing poverty was uneven, and social and economic inequalities had in some cases worsened. The countries of the South continued to bear the brunt of an unjust and unsustainable international economic and social order that undermined the commitments in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, Member States invested billions of dollars each year in military expenditures while failing to meet official development assistance commitments or provide sufficient new, predictable funding for genuine cooperation.

26. Her delegation stressed the need for sustainable, inclusive public policies based on the central role of States in social development. Cuba was working towards the Sustainable Development Goals with the moral force of having met the Millennium Development Goals despite the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for over 50 years. In Cuba, more than two-thirds of the State budget was devoted to social development. It had achieved one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world and had brought life expectancy to 78 years. Cuba had also been one of the first countries to eradicate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis. It was tackling the challenges of an ageing population, and it had eliminated illiteracy. In addition, it was continuing to provide cooperative assistance to other developing countries as well as medical training for thousands for foreign students.

27. **Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) said that, despite many promising statistics, there was cause for alarm. Poverty had increased in some regions, and income and wealth inequalities had grown in others. Extreme poverty persisted. The number of fragile States had risen, and some had collapsed in the face of climate catastrophes or conflict. Terrorism and violent extremism threatened many. His delegation would therefore continue to encourage all actors to consider what social development should entail and how to implement it for the benefit of all.

28. Morocco continued to pursue democratization, strengthen its human rights system and pursue political, economic and social reform. A national social development initiative launched in 2005 had substantially reduced poverty, marginalization, exclusion and illiteracy, as well as regional economic disparities. To achieve an inclusive, participatory and fully regionalized society, Morocco consistently devoted more than half of its national budget to social programmes. Thanks to massive investment in renewable energy, it ranked ninth in the world in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

29. **Mr. Logar** (Slovenia) said that ageism was pervasive across the globe and contributed to the economic and social exclusion of older people. To combat it, Slovenia had recently enacted an anti-discrimination law that specifically prohibited aged-based discrimination. Older persons faced a wide range of challenges that were not consistently addressed by existing human rights mechanisms. The international community must acknowledge and confront those challenges, whether by strengthening the existing framework or by drafting a new international instrument. In developing a national strategy to provide for an ageing society, Slovenia was consulting all stakeholders, including representatives of the elderly. However, its national guidelines would be significantly reinforced by the existence of adequate international standards.

30. **Mr. Šiler** (Slovenia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth was of particular significance for young people. Unemployment was only part of the problem. In Slovenia and Europe in general, most young people who were employed held part-time or precarious jobs. Historically, young people had proven to be able agents of change. They wanted and deserved an opportunity to show their skills, knowledge, talent and wisdom.

31. **Ms. Solórzano-Arriagada** (Nicaragua) said that implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals should be based on the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility, which would make it possible to transform the international economic order, establish a new economic and financial model and create new, sustainable production and consumption patterns. A number of States were working to achieve inclusive social development while confronting

destabilizing plans and actions; they should be allowed to proceed without interference in their internal affairs.

32. Priority areas for social development included education, health, food security and the family. Her Government had refocused the role of the State and instituted true citizen participation, as well as new forms of international cooperation and solidarity. It was working to restore the people's rights, including their rights to health, education, decent housing, employment, food and a life free from violence and pollution by, for example, extending free education to more children in rural areas and indigenous communities and providing free preventive health care and comprehensive services. Relying on a community-based security model, it had succeeded in making Nicaragua the safest country in Central America. To enhance its social development efforts, it was continuing to foster dialogue and concerted action among businesses, workers, small and mid-sized producers and government. Those efforts and policies had been recognized by the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

33. **Mr. Mohamed** (Libya) said that numerous major challenges cast a pall on the future of social development in many countries, and many people who had escaped extreme poverty remained vulnerable to falling back into it. New or growing challenges stood in the way of development. Helping all countries to meet those challenges would require coherent and comprehensive measures, as well as national economic policies focused on creating jobs, reducing social inequalities, building infrastructure and expanding basic health services and education in an inclusive manner. For developing countries to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community needed to coordinate more closely, create effective partnerships and provide development assistance.

34. The goals and targets set at the World Summit for Social Development had not been achieved, and international cooperation and coordination, in addition to building national capacities through effective partnerships with donor countries, would be required. Social development was a priority for his Government. Its efforts focused on protecting and supporting the

family, raising the standard of living, promoting women's status and participation in economic life, involving young people in decision-making, and providing gender-specific training and rehabilitation, as well as on including groups such as the young, the elderly and the disabled in development planning and enforcing their rights under national law. His delegation stressed the need to respect the sovereignty, values and rights of States, including their right to development, and to promote good governance. States had primary responsibility for their own socio-economic development.

35. **Mr. Meza-Cuadra Velásquez** (Peru) said that his Government had set a five-year goal of consolidating a modern democracy and ensuring access to quality services and equal opportunities for all citizens, without distinction. A core component of the 2030 Agenda, social development should focus on empowering the people and building more inclusive, participatory and just societies.

36. **Ms. Salazar Mujica** (Peru), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the boom in the working age population in Peru afforded new opportunities to invest in the health and education of the young. To be agents of change, young people — especially those in vulnerable situations — needed to have the tools to develop their abilities and creativity and take initiatives.

37. Peru had a series of guidelines and policies on young people, including a national youth development plan drawn up with the help of representatives of civil society organizations. It also had a scholarship programme for poor, unemployed youth and a programme that provided technical training, entrepreneurship assistance and job placement services for young people.

38. It was imperative to implement policies that fostered equality between men and women. Gender equality and women's empowerment remained illusory, both internationally and in Peru. Half of the victims of femicide in Peru were under 30 years of age.

39. **Ms. Sabia** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her Government remained fully committed to all aspects of social development. It had taken appropriate steps to address the global crisis of capitalism, balancing economic growth, redistribution of wealth and public investment. As a result, poverty and extreme poverty had plummeted, and Bolivia had the

fastest growing economy in South America. The nationalized hydrocarbon and telecommunications industries generated income that was shared with the people. Voucher programmes encouraged children to attend school and rewarded women for seeking pre- and postnatal health care. With the help of Cuba and Venezuela, her country had achieved almost universal literacy. An ambitious national housing plan provided housing for vulnerable, primarily indigenous families, and 85 per cent of the population had access to clean drinking water. The rights of disabled, young and older people were protected under the Bolivian Constitution.

40. **Mr. Pisarevich** (Belarus) said that equitable social development had been the foundation of Belarussian social policy for more than 20 years. His Government had been able to create a State strong enough to pursue consistent policies without interruption — a *sine qua non* for their success — and was developing a socially oriented model of development. Bucking the global trend, income inequality had declined in Belarus. His Government expected the National Assembly to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities soon and had recently launched a campaign to realize the rights of such vulnerable groups as children, persons with disabilities, persons who were HIV-positive, refugees and migrants. It had consistently supported the institution of the family and considered strong traditional families essential for the success of the 2030 Agenda.

41. **Ms. Pham Thi Kim Anh** (Viet Nam) said that the global community and the United Nations needed to strengthen efforts to ensure the social, economic and political inclusion of all, in accordance with the 2030 Agenda. Social development was a policy priority in Viet Nam. Her Government had universalized primary and secondary education and improved secondary-level vocational training, and it was investing heavily in health care with the goal of universal coverage. It had policies, programmes, laws and institutions that fostered the inclusion of women, children, disabled people, older people and ethnic minorities.

42. **Mr. Shulgin** (Russian Federation) said that the success of the 2030 Agenda would depend on developing specific measures for countries to implement the decisions of the World Summit for Social Development,

and the Commission for Social Development should continue to play a leadership role in that process.

43. Despite the complex economic situation, the Russian Federation remained committed to meeting its social development obligations. To ensure sustainable development, it was working to strengthen the traditional family, with a focus on work-family balance. It had held its first-ever national “family of the year” competition in 2016. It welcomed the recent events held in commemoration of the International Year of the Family as a result of interactions between the Group of Friends of the Family and civil society and hoped that the initiative would be further developed.

44. The Russian Federation was continuing to improve the scope and quality of support for older people, who would represent 30 per cent of its population by 2030. Its youth programmes focused on social adaptation, entrepreneurship, volunteering, civil society organizations, international cooperation, youth media, tolerance and young families, and it was prepared to share its long experience with regional and national youth forums at the nineteenth World Festival of Youth and Students in 2017.

45. The needs of persons with disabilities were addressed in part through its Accessible Environment programme, which included the barrier-free schools initiative, under which the curriculum and environment of 20 per cent of schools had already been adapted to mainstream disabled children.

46. **Mr. Ruiz Blanco** (Colombia) said that the 2030 Agenda required continued commitment to eradicating all forms of poverty and reducing inequities, taking into account new challenges that threatened to reverse fragile gains. To ensure that no one was left behind, States should focus on creating an environment in which everyone enjoyed the same opportunities, regardless of personal or material circumstances.

47. Through its national disability system, Colombia was taking an intersectoral approach to fully including persons with disabilities in society. With one of the youngest populations in the world, it had a particular interest in ensuring that young people became agents of positive change and was therefore strengthening its national youth system, which supported quality education, sports, culture and entrepreneurship and

created opportunities for decent work. In view of the fundamental role of families in development, it was working to improve conditions for families of all kinds by coordinating its family policy with other policies, strategies and programmes. It reiterated its support for strengthening the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing and for a United Nations convention on the rights of older people. Firmly convinced that, for true social development, the built environment must be designed to allow everyone to achieve his or her full potential, Colombia attached considerable importance to the forthcoming third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development.

48. *Mr. Glossner (Germany), Vice-Chair, took the Chair*

49. **Ms. Grignon** (Kenya) said that Governments and the international community must build on the foundation and momentum of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change. In accordance with its people-centred approach to development, Kenya set aside 30 per cent of all procurement contracts for women, young people and persons with disabilities. It provided credit access and cash transfers for unstable or vulnerable households with older persons, as well as free, age-appropriate essential health services for older persons. In addition to making primary education free and subsidizing secondary education, it was implementing a project to provide all primary school children with laptops and train their teachers on their use, and it had improved and expanded its technical and vocational training institutions. Measures for persons with disabilities included laws requiring public service and semi-public corporations to reserve 5 per cent of jobs for the disabled; enhanced enterprise development support; mainstreaming of learners with disabilities and a programme to train teachers in inclusive education.

50. Continued conflict and terrorism in the Horn of Africa forced her Government to divert billions of dollars from development to peace and security, and she appealed to Member States and the United Nations to assist it in managing and resolving the situation. Social inclusion itself would require international cooperation, multi-stakeholder partnerships and the mobilization of domestic resources. It was therefore critical that Member States should fulfil their official

development assistance commitments as well as their commitments under the global partnerships for development.

51. **Ms. Senanayake** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country's extensive youth-related infrastructure operated under the umbrella of the Ministry of National Policies and Economic Affairs and included organizations such as a national youth services council and a national federation of youth clubs. Free education had contributed to a literacy rate of more than 90 per cent. However, youth unemployment and underemployment remained high, owing in part to a need to develop youth skills by, for example, focusing skill development programmes on the job market and increasing computer literacy. In that connection, Sri Lanka took pride in having contributed to the establishment of World Youth Skills Day.

52. **Mr. Dulanjana** (Sri Lanka), speaking as a youth delegate, said that in 2015, with the support of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife, the United Nations Information Centre in Sri Lanka had conducted an island-wide campaign to raise youth awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals. Sri Lanka ranked second in the world for volunteerism, and young volunteers could be a driving force for achieving sustainable development. Young people needed to be educated about the importance of advocating appropriate measures to protect human rights, including steps to increase the number of women parliamentarians and to create nurturing environments for girls and disabled children. The Sri Lankan youth delegates pledged to work to empower youth and create the necessary environment for their development.

53. **Ms. Oh Youngju** (Republic of Korea) said that, in targeting efforts to leave no one behind, it was important to consider the overarching impact. On that basis, her Government was concentrating on assisting refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, disabled persons and women and girls. For refugees, it had pledged to provide \$230 million in multilateral humanitarian assistance over the next three years, and, with regard to disabled persons, it had supported the opening and recent refurbishing of the United Nations Accessibility Centre in Bangkok. It also funded projects for improving the health and education of girls in developing countries.

54. Fostering and strengthening genuine partnerships with major social actors would be crucial. It was also essential to enlist the help of young people, who were often the most passionate, fearless and productive members of society.

55. **Ms. Un Hyung Lee** (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, for young people, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was about the future they would leave their children. Education that helped young people realize their full potential and develop empathy would allow them contribute more effectively to sustainable development. It was also important to involve young people in decision-making on matters that affected them. She herself had witnessed positive changes in that regard, including the establishment of youth participation committees, almost 90 per cent of whose policy recommendations had been accepted by her Government. Her country's youth remained committed to participating in the envisioned transformation of the world.

56. **Ms. Katanasho** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Member States had a responsibility to protect the human rights of refugee children, who were exposed to dangers such as violence, sexual abuse and human trafficking. Half of all refugee children were out of school, and the percentage of out-of-school refugee girls and disabled children was even greater. In addition to being a human right, education was essential for displaced children to live meaningful lives. Furthermore, safe learning environments made children less vulnerable to violence, sexual abuse, child prostitution and human trafficking. In closing, she urged every Committee member to sign the UNHCR #WithRefugees petition.

57. **Mr. Tollaksen** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that LGBTI refugees were among the most vulnerable. Member States had a responsibility to protect the rights of all of their citizens and had committed themselves to ensuring sustainable development for all — including LGBTI persons. The Norwegian youth delegates urged all Member States to review the status of human rights for LGBTI persons, to cooperate with the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and to take the voices of LGBTI persons into account in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

58. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, despite ambitious goals for social development, poverty and hunger persisted, and unemployment had risen. In some parts of the world, foreign occupation threatened peace and security, thereby hindering social development. After five years of gruelling war, his Government was fighting terrorism and waiting for Member States to deliver on their promises. Despite its best efforts, it had been unable to stem the economic catastrophe. Armed terrorist groups funded and supported by States in and outside the Arab world controlled the sale of crops and attacked infrastructure, hospitals, places of worship and archaeological sites. The negative impact of such systematic destruction was intensified by a multitude of unilateral coercive measures targeting economic, financial, agricultural, industrial and health activities. United States and the European Union sanctions continued to harm all Syrians, causing food shortages, decimating health care and paralyzing relief and development assistance at a time when his Government was cooperating with the United Nations and its humanitarian organizations in accordance with agreed plans for bringing humanitarian aid to his people.

59. **Ms. Zahir** (Maldives) said that social inclusion was at the heart of the Maldives' development policy. It had introduced a universal health insurance scheme, and it provided free education for all children up to the higher secondary level. To tap the potential of young people, who constituted almost half of the population, it emphasized creating new opportunities for higher education, building entertainment and sports facilities, rehabilitating and reintegrating drug users and funding youth entrepreneurship. Its laws stipulated equal pay for women, prohibited gender-based discrimination in the workplace, guaranteed equal opportunities women and men and protected women against gender-based and sexual violence. Disabled people were guaranteed equal rights under the Constitution, and their rights were expanded and enforced by a law on the protection of disabled persons.

60. Given the disproportionate impact of climate change and environmental degradation on vulnerable populations, it was vital to integrate climate change adaptation into social development policies.

61. **Mr. Sevilla Borja** (Ecuador) said that uneven progress on employment, productivity and social

integration had hindered efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve other social development goals. Defeating poverty was a moral imperative because, for the first time in history, it was due not to scarce resources or natural factors but solely to unjust, exclusionary systems and the opposition of certain elites to eliminating its structural causes. Ecuador had thus supported a development agenda that placed people before capital and promoted a more equitable distribution of income and wealth within and among societies.

62. The existence of tax evasion and tax havens, which could only be eliminated through political struggle, demonstrated that development was fundamentally a political problem. His Government was concerned at the revelation of hundreds of billions of hidden dollars that should have been used for development.

63. Ecuador's approach to development was based on living fully without the excesses of the consumer society. By investing massively in social development, it was building a more inclusive, equitable society. Given the importance of respecting the rights of persons with disabilities, it had made changes essential for their inclusion, but much remained to be done. It would continue working to achieve a more inclusive society by promoting integration, services and benefits for historically excluded groups such as persons of African descent, indigenous peoples, women, refugees and migrants, older persons, disabled persons and children and adolescents.

64. *Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) resumed the Chair.*

65. **Mr. Khiari** (Tunisia) said that achieving sustainable development for all required overcoming prejudices and reforming institutions, which would take real political commitment and numerous, concrete national and international initiatives. The development and well-being of the Tunisian people were central to Tunisia's new five-year plan, which aimed to promote good governance, a green economy, regional development, transition from a low-cost economy to an economic hub, and human and social development. Its social development policy was based on equal opportunity, elimination of exclusion and marginalization, solidarity among social groups, regions and generations and respect for human rights. In view of Tunisia's fragile economy and security, emergency measures had

recently been announced, including government subsidies for hiring young unemployed university graduates ('dignity contracts') and a subsidized housing programme for the poorest and most vulnerable.

66. **Mr. Barros Melet** (Chile) said that while Chile had met the poverty-related Millennium Development Goal, it had not eradicated poverty, which disproportionately affected children and adolescents, indigenous people and in the rural population. Because income was only one dimension of poverty, it had developed a methodology for measuring multidimensional poverty. His Government was working to strengthen the social protection system by providing social safety nets in education, health and employment. Building on steady improvements in education coverage, it was implementing reforms to provide free access to quality education for all and had recently enacted a law making primary and secondary education free and prohibiting profit-making, discrimination and co-payments in publicly funded schools. It had achieved substantial improvements in maternal and infant mortality, life expectancy and other indicators.

67. Achieving greater equality between women and men was an urgent matter in Chile. It would require, *inter alia*, more equitable access to the labour markets, increased labour-market participation of women from low-income households; better wages for women and mechanisms enabling women workers to negotiate with their employers. To promote equity for women, his Government had established the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity and was implementing women's training programmes. Lastly, it was also implementing international standards of transparency and information access, which would improve Chileans' ability to enforce their social rights.

68. **Mr. Skinner-Klee Arenales** (Guatemala) said that a new transformative approach was needed to deal effectively with increasingly complex and interrelated problems, such as growing inequality, increased migrant flows and climate change. The pronounced inequalities and inequities that characterized Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole were more evident in a multi-ethnic, multicultural, multilingual country. For that reason, Guatemala actively supported the Group of Friends of Sustainable Development Goal 10 on reducing inequalities. As a middle-income country, it faced other significant challenges, including

providing youth employment, decent work for all, culturally relevant education, health care and social welfare. It continued to implement various social programmes for Guatemalans in extreme poverty, such as conditional money transfers in education and health, food cards, public kitchens, extracurricular activities for at-risk youth and education and employment grants.

69. Persons with disabilities faced not only poverty but also the inaccessible or exclusionary nature of public services. As part of its policy of breaking down barriers for the disabled, Guatemala had ratified the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled.

70. His delegation stressed the importance of sustained, adequate investment in youth as well as collaborative efforts to ensure their participation in every sector and offer them every possible opportunity. It also stressed the importance of promoting and protecting the rights of older persons. Noting the recent entry into force of the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, he urged renewed effort to develop an international convention on their rights.

71. **Ms. Afzal** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, 25 years after the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, more than 200 million children were still being denied their rights. Each Member State should reassess the situation of children's rights within its own borders. Even in the Netherlands, children in emergency refugee centres were denied an education.

72. Many people wrongly thought that implementing the Sustainable Development Goals was solely a government and business matter. Much could be accomplished by motivated individuals — especially young people, who often thought outside the box — and attention should be given to motivating them. It made no sense to ignore the young, who constituted a large proportion of the world's population.

73. In 2015, the biggest gathering of young people globally had been organized by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Problems such as discrimination, insufficient social services and lack of education had made them susceptible to radicalization and violent extremism. Those young people's States had failed

them, and those same States must find ways to do better. Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth and peace and security should encourage security stakeholders to talk with young people affected by the root causes of conflict, demystify their policy-making processes and create trusting relationships.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.



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Seventy-first session

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 5 October 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia)

Contents

Organization of work

Agenda item 26: Social development (*continued*)

- (a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)
- (b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 05 a.m.

Organization of work

1. **The Chair**, reporting on her consultations with the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs as to whether the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea could provide an oral update at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, said that the provisions of Human Rights Council resolutions 29/18 and 32/34, read together, provided a sufficient basis for members of the commission of inquiry to provide such an update, notwithstanding the fact that the Human Rights Council had not extended the mandate of the commission of inquiry. She therefore intended to proceed on that basis.

2. **Mr. Said** (Eritrea) sought assurances that his delegation would have the opportunity to formulate another question to the Office of Legal Affairs in the event that no agreement was reached.

3. **The Chair** said that further consultations among the interested parties would be held.

Agenda item 26: Social development (*continued*) (A/71/188)

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/71/61-E/2016/7, A/71/214)

(b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*) (A/71/177)

4. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the Report on the World Social Situation 2016 provided a reminder that while poverty had declined dramatically across the world, progress remained uneven and social and economic inequalities were increasing in many cases. Nowhere was that deterioration more apparent than in areas where protracted conflict had become a part of daily life; children and youth were being raised under the rules of war, rather than the rule of law. For the victims of conflict, there was no peace and security, no human rights and development — no one to turn to for help.

5. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development showed great promise in addressing the root causes of conflict and crises, making them less likely to happen

in the future. If achieved with full respect for human life and dignity, the 2030 Agenda would eradicate extreme poverty, reverse rising inequality, stem environmental degradation and lay the foundation for peaceful and inclusive societies.

6. The needs of those forced to migrate must be addressed. Unable to secure a regular and orderly path, migrants risked their lives at the hands of traffickers. If they reached their intended destination, they were often met with hostility, fear, racism and xenophobia. The recently adopted New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants had set the stage for a series of commitments to face those challenges collectively, but political will, cooperation and solidarity would be required to translate that hope into reality.

7. At a time of major migratory movements, the question of identity was not a secondary issue. Both those who migrated and those who welcomed them were forced to change. The challenge was not to experience those changes as obstacles but as opportunities for genuine human, social and spiritual growth.

8. **Mr. Warraich** (Pakistan) said that the goal of social development had often been seen as economic growth, yet his Government saw the social and economic dimensions of development as indivisible and mutually reinforcing. Development could not be sustainable if it was not broad-based and inclusive. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development had first enunciated that linkage, while the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development placed the individual at the core of the development paradigm. Social development was a process that involved a fairer distribution of opportunity and resources to foster social justice by reducing inequality within and between States through promotion of inclusive societies.

9. The international community had just observed the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, which complemented the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There was a growing recognition that development could not be fully realized without the ability to participate in the development process. Pakistan attached great importance to the social uplift of its people by providing new and better opportunities for all in society. The Government had taken a number of nationwide initiatives to provide financial support,

education and technical training to the most vulnerable segments of the population to enable them to graduate from poverty and gain the technical skills needed to function as productive members of society. It had also designed strategies for women, youth and the disabled to partner in development and participate fully in society, in line with its commitment to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

10. **Ms. Kay** (Singapore) said that General Assembly resolution 70/129, "Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond" recognized volunteerism as a powerful means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The number of youth volunteers in Singapore was increasing; the approach was based on integrating volunteerism into national strategies and creating an environment which empowered youth to take ownership of causes they felt passionately about, focusing on the areas of education, volunteer champions and digital platforms.

11. In the area of education, volunteer programmes were embedded into the national school curriculum through the Values in Action programme. To engage youth beyond their school years, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and the National Youth Council had partnered with the Ministry of Education in the development of the Community and Youth Leadership School initiative. Efforts to support the creation of youth volunteer champions included the establishment of the Youth Corps Singapore to harness their potential through community service and leadership programmes. The National Youth Council also administered the National Youth Fund to promote ground-up projects. The Internet, social media and other digital platforms were key to reaching the young. An integrated online portal, Giving.sg, made volunteer opportunities accessible on a single website.

12. It was essential to continue to engage youth by providing them with a conducive environment, maximizing their opportunities and expanding their networks, as part of an overall effort to encourage volunteerism across all levels of society.

13. **Mr. Rosa** (Honduras), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Government of Honduras was actively working to promote inclusion of its youth in the country's development. It was providing scholarships and loans for education, as well as grants

for young entrepreneurs through the "Banca Solidaria" programme. Graduates of technical schools and universities were encouraged to form new ventures as a way to create new opportunities and jobs for youth.

14. **Mr. Donado** (Honduras), speaking as a youth delegate, said that 60 per cent of the population of Honduras was under age 25. The Government, in addition to fighting corruption and crime as a means of rising out of under-development and poverty, was focusing on youth employment. A programme to create 450 jobs in public hospitals was aimed at creating secure jobs and futures for graduates, while improving services to patients of limited means. Another project had employed youth in bringing electricity to thousands of rural families without access to that basic public utility, improving their standard of living.

15. His travels throughout Honduras as a medical interpreter had convinced him that it was more important than ever to harness the passion of youth and to work in solidarity to achieve a better world.

16. **Ms. Al Amri** (Saudi Arabia) said that her Government had included the 2030 Agenda in all its social development plans. It had been among the first to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had taken a number of measures at the national level to ensure their full enjoyment of rights and participation in society. Resources had been allocated to encourage all levels of education, in order to provide graduates with skills to meet the needs of the job market and foster youth employment through national job creation measures. Efforts to improve the medical system had resulted in an increase in life expectancy. Her Government had also taken measures to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and participated in cultural and scientific exchanges. In its view, one of the main obstacles to social development was the need to promote and guarantee basic rights in the least developed countries.

17. **Ms. Dolidze** (Georgia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that youth had a role to play in the journey towards sustainable development, as beneficiaries, partners and agents of positive change.

18. In Georgia, the biggest challenge in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals was ensuring that no one was left behind, given the fact that a significant portion of Georgian territory was under

Russian occupation. She described a young Georgian who, as a boy, had been kidnapped in South Ossetia, yet had survived and after his release had gone on to win a medal for his country at the 2016 Rio Olympics. The international community should foster the hopes rather than the fears of young people living in conflict-affected areas. In its implementation of the Goals, her country ensured that the 400,000 internally displaced persons in its territory also benefitted.

19. As a youth delegate, she had spearheaded a campaign to popularize vocational education, towards the implementation of Goals 1, 4 and 8. A flashmob raising awareness of pedestrian safety in crosswalks had also targeted Goals 3 and 11.

20. Among remaining challenges, employment was a major concern to Georgian youth. The majority of unemployed young people had completed higher education, indicating that the natural link from education to employment had been broken. Although more women than men had advanced degrees, women's unemployment rates were higher. Gender imbalances went beyond economic discrimination; harmful traditional practices and sexual violence were still common. Regrettably, discrimination against persons with disabilities was also still the norm among Georgian youth.

21. The youth of Georgia and the world must come together to combat the darkness of animosity and fear, social injustice, gender inequality and most importantly, ignorance and indifference.

22. **Mr. Eigeland** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the stage had been set for empowerment of young people, who were recognized as critical agents of change.

23. An overwhelming majority of the young people he had met in his capacity as a youth delegate had expressed confidence in the future, but that confidence had been tempered by fear of economic disruption and inequality. For many, inequality was driven by unemployment; in his own country the unemployment rate for youth was twice that of the general population.

24. In addition to raising the most pressing issues they faced, young people had also proposed solutions. In their view, the starting point for inclusive economic development must be inclusive, relevant and high-

quality education. For example, information technology was being used effectively to provide affordable access to education in remote areas of Australia. The time had long since come for equal gender representation in industry, technology and government and for policy frameworks to encourage women to participate in society and men to share in the unpaid care work for their families.

25. His generation, which would reach its forties by 2030 and the conclusion of the Sustainable Development Goals, did not want to be forced to admit to the next generation that it had failed to build an inclusive economic agenda, and was prepared to meet that challenge.

26. **Mr. Wu Haitao** (China) said that hundreds of millions of people were living in extreme poverty, and developing countries faced significant social development challenges that were compounded by a sluggish global economy, regional territorial conflicts and the spreading threat of terrorism. As the first goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a core social development issue, the eradication of poverty should be prioritized by the international community. Countries needed to take effective action to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, an important element of which was social development.

27. In developing awareness of a shared future for humanity and rectifying the emerging imbalance between North and South, developed countries should honour their Official Development Assistance commitments and help developing countries achieve social development, improve education levels and respond to public health challenges. Developing countries needed to strengthen South-South cooperation to achieve solidarity and self-reliance.

28. Social inclusiveness was a moral imperative and increased participation by vulnerable groups in education, health and employment was required to enhance sustainable development. The United Nations needed to play a greater role in helping developing countries in particular to achieve social development. The Commission for Social Development must fulfil its mandate from the Copenhagen Summit and strive for early achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as poverty eradication, education, health and employment.

29. China was the world's most populous developing country and the first to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Remarkable results in poverty reduction, health and education had been achieved in the past 15 years, with 400 million people lifted out of poverty and the potential elimination of poverty entirely by 2020. By the end of 2015, China had contributed 400 billion yuan to 166 countries and organizations, and had provided training to 12 million people in developing countries.

30. China had incorporated the 2030 Agenda targets into its national development plans, and believed it could reach the goals for poverty and hunger eradication, maternity and child health care, and housing ahead of schedule. Other priority targets for agriculture, health, education and economic growth could be attained on schedule by 2030.

31. **Ms. Picco** (Monaco) said that poverty eradication and the promotion of full employment and decent work remained important goals, while clear but unequal social progress was being achieved. Human-centred development with a focus on leaving no one behind must include the portion of the global population living in extreme poverty, over 10 per cent. Societies needed to combat poverty if they were to achieve sustainable development, which required the participation of all members of society in every country.

32. Achievement of the economic and environmental goals called for a truly inclusive society in which the necessary changes in approach to production, consumption and the environment could be adopted. Literacy was an essential tool in combatting poverty and social exclusion. In view of the literacy figures cited from the report by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), priority should be given to the education of women and girls. Strengthened efforts were needed to eliminate the vicious cycle of social exclusion.

33. Monaco praised the continued work of Mongolia on literacy and supported UNICEF in its travelling schools project to bring quality education to the children of nomadic herders in remote regions of that country. The partnership between UNESCO and Microsoft reinforced the innovative use of digital technology for local language literacy and distance learning.

34. **Mr. Sukhee** (Mongolia) said that it was crucial to examine the nexus of interrelated factors affecting social inclusion in view of the uneven results obtained globally, as development would only be sustainable if inclusive. Mongolia had recently adopted the Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030 following the 2030 Agenda. Its social development objectives were to ensure gender equality, provide equal high-quality education to every citizen, build a national system for lifelong education, end all forms of poverty, and expand the middle-income segment of the population. The first phase was the Government Action Plan for 2016-2020, launched in August 2016. In urban areas, more schools and nurseries would be built, and students would continue to receive monthly stipends and free school bus and public transport services. School attendance by children of herders in rural areas would be supported, and their dormitory facilities would be significantly enhanced.

35. In the field of health care, methods of medical diagnosis would be advanced, public health education improved, and a national disease prevention programme implemented, along with capacity-building activities for medical professionals. Health sector funding would gradually be doubled, and a special fund established to support the health sector.

36. The Government of Mongolia was addressing the financing of the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development with measures including educational subsidies and loans, and a planned increase in results-based public funding for academic research and innovation. Literacy was a means of individual empowerment and the realization of a more inclusive, just and sustainable society.

37. **Mr. Khoshroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that greater health, wealth and education had not necessarily resulted in more equal societies worldwide. Structural shifts were required to overcome the economic, social and political barriers that often excluded certain demographic groups, or indeed countries, from prosperity.

38. Nine of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were closely associated with social development. Their implementation should focus particularly on the elderly, youth, persons with disabilities and the family to improve the inclusion of those groups and reap the greatest societal benefits.

39. Iran prioritized youth empowerment in the social, economic and political arenas. Extensive investment in education and health care had already been paid off despite challenges including an imposed war and unfair sanctions. The rights and privileges of senior citizens remain safeguarded. The Government had provided education and training for persons with disabilities and hiring incentives for prospective employers.

40. The country's continual improvement in the Human Development Index confirmed the success of the measures to date, although more work was needed, particularly on employment.

41. **Mr. Lambertini** (Italy) said the 2030 Agenda would empower the largest generation of young people in history to shape the future. For 15 years, the National Civilian Service had been allowing young people aged 18 to 28 to experience active citizenship for one year in projects focusing on solidarity, cooperation and assistance. The Italian Government had made the European Voluntary Service one of its objectives as a result, and had initiated a pilot project with France for 100 Italian and French youths who would undertake their voluntary service in both countries.

42. Italy strongly welcomed Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) officially recognizing the positive, powerful role of young people in building, maintaining and promoting international peace and security, preventing and combatting violent extremism, and sustaining democratic and inclusive governance.

43. The Italian Parliament had recently adopted a law recognizing specific protections for persons with severe disabilities upon the passing of their caregiving parents, aimed at ensuring maximum autonomy and independence of disabled persons in such circumstances. At the fifth National Conference on Disabilities held in September 2016 the Plan of Action for 2018 was discussed with the participation of the Prime Minister and over 1,000 representatives of national institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and persons with disabilities.

44. **Ms. Berrouba** (Sweden), speaking as a youth delegate, said that education was a human right, a cornerstone of critical thinking and self-realization, and a catalyst for gender equality, health, peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Every society should prioritize education by ensuring that every child and young person went to school, and also by dedicating special methods and resources to reaching young people whose access to education had previously been limited, such as those in extreme poverty and young migrants and refugees. Gender-based differences in access to education must be eliminated. Everyone must have access to all levels of education and lifelong learning.

45. Children and youth comprised half of the current refugee population, making the refugee crisis a generational one. The conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan and climate change were displacing large numbers of people and creating new migration patterns. With living as a refugee becoming increasingly common, legal routes for refugees, as well as their human rights, security, health, and opportunities for self-fulfilment and self-reliance were of growing importance. The right to asylum must be unanimously upheld. Human rights were inalienable; urgent action was needed to ensure refugees' rights to shelter, employment, education and safe passage. If young refugees did not have access to education, there was a risk that an entire generation would be lost.

46. Inclusive social, political and economic platforms were needed to address those challenges, and young people must be allowed to have the necessary information to take part. Education would make that awareness possible. Partnerships for change both between and within countries, and specifically intergenerational dialogue, were needed for the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

47. **Mr. Phansourivong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his Government attached great importance to social development, particularly poverty eradication, education, health and employment. National social development programmes and projects had resulted in a reduction in poverty and improved household welfare. Sustained economic growth had enabled his country to go from being a low-income country to a lower middle-income country according to the World Bank. However, its growth was overly reliant on the extractive sector; diversification was needed for increased resilience and growth that was sustainable.

48. His Government's prioritization of education had led to a considerable increase in the percentage of

children enrolled in primary education in the period from 2005 to 2015. It was also strengthening technical and vocational training to enable the country's workforce to meet labour market demands. Nevertheless, challenges remained: the school dropout rate was still high, particularly in remote areas, and the quality of education required improvement.

49. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had measures in place to eliminate social discrimination against persons with disabilities, support their social integration and ensure that no one was left behind. The Government was committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as its social and economic development plan demonstrated.

50. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that his Government was implementing the 2030 Agenda in coordination with relevant national and regional plans. It was in the process of drafting a new, inclusive national development plan, which would address the needs of communities across the country. The Government had also launched a five-year prosperity plan to accelerate development and ensure that no one was left behind. In the first year of implementation some targets, such as the launch of urban food banks, had already been met. The plan would lead to, *inter alia*, greater transparency at the national level, a reduction in poverty, the establishment of a competitive vocational training system and measures to support youth entrepreneurship.

51. Since universal access to education was key to the success of those plans, the Government had made its free primary education policy also applicable to secondary education, resulting in higher levels of enrolment and more university students obtaining teaching degrees in order to teach in rural areas. Technical and vocational institutions were being revitalized. The Government was also allocating greater financial resources to the provision of social safety nets for the elderly, orphans and people living with disabilities.

52. El Niño had left much of Namibia drought-stricken, causing record numbers of livestock deaths and low crop yields. The effects of the drought on rural populations, coupled with falling commodity prices, which increased the cost of essential items, were devastating. His Government therefore called for

continued assistance from bilateral and development partners.

53. **Ms. O'Reilly** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young Irish people felt marginalized and discriminated against. The solution was education and integration. Social, political and civic education should be made compulsory, and education should not be segregated on any grounds, including religion or gender. Humanity must focus on that which united it, not that which divided it. Young women should not have to anticipate futures in which they were likely to be paid less than their male colleagues, and more likely to experience sexual assault than men. A just and sustainable future world could not be achieved by excluding sectors of society. A future that left no one behind should be built not just for everyone, but by everyone.

54. **Mr. O'Rourke** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he had consulted young people across Ireland concerning what those in power should prioritize, and youth participation had emerged as a common theme. Young Irish people had also expressed fears about what the future would hold for them as Europeans and about political extremism fracturing the bonds that united society. Youth participation, through such initiatives as the 2030 Agenda and Global Citizenship Education, could help to counter extremism. Young people could provide the fresh perspectives needed to solve age-old problems; therefore they should be supported to become agents for change: educational institutions should have student councils and should award academic credit for civic engagement, youth organizations should be run by young people, and regional youth councils should be established and strengthened. Young people trusted in society, but society needed to place more trust in them.

55. **Mr. Beleffi** (San Marino), highlighting the connection between human rights and global challenges related to poverty, climate change, inequality, terrorism, conflict, violent extremism and the refugee crisis, said that promotion and protection of human rights should underpin efforts by the United Nations to achieve peace, security and sustainable development. His Government hoped, through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to eradicate poverty, increase employment and decent work, and

foster social integration to build a stable, safe and just society.

56. His Government focused on the needs of the most vulnerable, such as children, disabled people, the elderly and women. The advancement of women's rights must be a top priority for the United Nations. Recalling the clear relationship between disability, poverty and social exclusion, he pointed out that San Marino had been one of the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It recognized the importance of older persons in its charter on the rights of the elderly, adopted in 2008, and encouraged them to play an active part in society. His country called for the universal ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. San Marino would unfailingly support the United Nations in its essential role in promoting social development.

57. **Ms. Bratu and Mr. Uifalean** (Romania), speaking as youth delegates, said that the world was globalized, digitized, unequal and violent, and the greater good for the majority could be accomplished only through teamwork. Since civic engagement was vital in developing the societies people wanted, and also in fostering the vital attributes of critical thinking, creativity and openness, national legislation should make it a mandatory exercise for every young person. There should be national mentoring programmes for vulnerable young people, such as orphans and those living in poverty.

58. Regardless of background, young people must be given tools to enable them to fulfil their role as co-creators of society. The existing educational system offered only some of what was needed to navigate professional and private life. Unfortunately, pressure to perform academically dominated young people's formative experience. Education should foster curiosity and inspire commitment to lifelong learning and self-improvement. Young people needed fulfilling professional lives to be able to actively support society. Various entities in Romania were supporting young people to find work through practical vocational programmes and volunteering opportunities. It was possible to be guided by the Sustainable Development Goals in one's academic, professional and personal life, but in order for that to happen the 2030 Agenda

must be brought to the attention of young people, who had the energy to push it forward.

59. **Mr. Musama** (Zambia) said that Zambia was focused on inclusive, people-centred growth and had made the reduction of inequalities a priority in the National Performance Framework that guided the country's Seventh National Development Plan. The Government remained committed to the goals set forth in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and had put in place policies aimed at creating jobs and reducing poverty by facilitating investments in select sectors and rural development.

60. As in other countries, persons with disabilities in Zambia still faced barriers to social inclusion due to inadequate access to services, facilities and opportunities. Significant progress had been made in implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, however, with the enactment of legislation to mainstream disability issues and the implementation of a comprehensive national policy on disability. A national survey on disabilities had been conducted, with cooperation partners, in 2015, and an information management system for disability statistics was under development. A national policy on ageing, addressing the full range of interrelated issues of old age and poverty, had been introduced that same year. In recognition of the role of the family in social integration, the Government had also introduced a cash transfer programme to protect the poorest families and reduce both extreme poverty and the inter-generational transfer of poverty. Over 240,000 households currently benefited under the scheme.

61. **Ms. Swaelens** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that youth participation in decision-making had evolved from the mere consultation of young people to a benchmark for real participative policymaking. Youth had been extensively involved in designing the 2030 agenda. For the sustainable development goals to become a success, however, it would be of paramount importance to keep youth on board. She therefore called on Governments, the United Nations and civil society to unleash the potential of youth and give more attention to youth participation, especially at the local, community level,

where it represented development not only of young people but of society in general.

62. **Ms. N'sa** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, in many countries, including hers, the quality of education that young people could obtain still depended on their social background, while in conflict zones, young people had no access to any education, in clear violation of their human rights. For youth to participate effectively in society as a force for peace and development, as described in Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), they must be equipped with quality education based on knowledge, professional training and personal development and the principles of solidarity and peaceful coexistence. She urged Member States to invest in that quality education and in equal access to it, so that, together with effective youth participation, by 2030 they might cease to be goals on the development agenda and become realities instead and young people might have a stronger, safer and more egalitarian society in which to play their part.

63. **Ms. Al-Temimi** (Qatar) said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had set forth ambitious and promising goals and would spur the international community to continue striving to achieve inclusive sustainable development. Her country believed that, in the light of the persistent global disparities in terms of human development, it was crucial to promote social integration, which could help promote equitable development in both advanced and developing countries. On that basis, Qatar had adopted a people-centred approach in its national development plans in order to promote social development for all segments of society, eliminate poverty, ensure that everyone enjoyed access to high-quality education and create employment opportunities for all, including youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities.

64. By mainstreaming disability in the 2030 Agenda, the international community had underscored its commitment to ensuring that nobody was left behind. In that regard, Qatar had ensured that disability issues were addressed in its national development plans and was striving to empower persons with disabilities so that they could reap the benefits of development and enjoy access to all the services provided by the Government. Qatar also accorded particular attention

to the situation of older persons and had formulated policies and programmes to ensure that they remained fully integrated members of their families and society and enjoyed access to social security programmes and healthcare services.

65. The statistics contained in the report of the Director-General of UNESCO entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas" were worrying. At the same time there was cause for optimism and Qatar was convinced that the international community's ongoing efforts to eliminate illiteracy would eventually prove successful. Qatar believed that education was the key to development and was developing and supporting innovative educational programmes and initiatives both within the country and abroad, including the Education Above All initiative, which aimed to uphold children's right to education in crisis- and conflict-stricken regions, and the Educate a Child initiative, which aimed to provide high-quality primary education to more than 10 million children worldwide by the end of 2016.

66. Qatar had adopted laws and policies to strengthen the family, which was the fundamental unit of society, while the Qatar National Vision 2030 set forth measures to enhance the social safety net for families, particularly those in difficult circumstances, combat family violence and provide marital and family counselling. Qatar also sought raise awareness of the importance of intergenerational family relationships and, for over 12 years, had facilitated, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Committee's negotiations concerning resolutions on the International Year of the Family.

67. Qatar was encouraging innovation and creativity among young people, who could play a key role in fostering development, supported civil society organizations advocating on behalf of young people, and was making every effort to combat violent extremism and its impact on young people and children in Qatar, the region and beyond. Qatar also underscored the importance of addressing the needs of the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable sectors of society, and expanding the scope of initiatives and partnerships to address their needs, particularly in least developed countries.

68. **Mr. Syed** (Canada), speaking as a youth delegate, said it was important to recognize that the imagination,

energy and ideals of young people were vital for the continued development of society. In Canada, the Prime Minister had mandated a national focus on youth development, and a youth council had been established to advise on a range of national issues. He encouraged other countries to engage in such consultations and to engage youth at all levels. It was also important to foster an environment of equal opportunity for all youth in which there was zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind.

69. **Ms. Tejeda-Alix** (Canada), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the prosperity of a nation depended on the productivity and innovation of its workforce and, in turn, on the training of its youth. Partnerships between industry, government and the education sector must be forged to promote quality education, prepare young people for the workplace and support their entrepreneurial initiatives. Young people in Canada were fortunate to live in a society where rights were respected and the rule of law and the accommodation of differences prevailed. Canadian youth were motivated to work with their counterparts around the globe to ensure youth everywhere could thrive. They called on all youth to challenge their leaders, friends, colleagues and professors, as well as themselves.

70. **Mr. Al-Hussaini** (Iraq) said that his country had been one of the first to accede to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Iraqi Constitution enshrined the rights of all sectors of society, including families, young people, mothers, children, older persons, the sick and persons with disabilities. The Constitution also guaranteed the provision of assistance to older persons to promote their full integration into society and to young people so that they could develop the skills they needed to realize their full potential, and prohibited all forms of child exploitation. Furthermore, Iraq provided loans and grants for the establishment of small business enterprises, particularly to young people, sought to provide vocational training to boost employment, and had increased the social assistance provided by the State to those most in need.

71. Iraq's 2014-2018 development plan sought to enhance the healthcare services and social support provided to vulnerable sectors of society. Iraq was also seeking to combat corruption. The Government was, moreover, sponsoring research into the provision of

assistance with a view to enhancing efficiency and ensuring that support reached those who needed it most.

72. Although Iraq was making every effort to promote development, it faced a multitude of challenges. Those included major security and economic challenges resulting from the actions of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) criminal gangs, including their occupation of certain parts of the country, their destruction of the country's infrastructure and restrictions they had placed on economic activity. That had exacerbated poverty in the areas they occupied, worsened unemployment, severely curtailed children's education, undermined the provision of healthcare services and undermined the country's social and cultural values. Furthermore, the internal displacement of Iraqis had severely undermined their social and economic wellbeing. The Iraqi Government was, nonetheless, steadfast in its determination to do everything possible to improve the social situation of the Iraqi people by promoting development and social cohesion. To that end, the Government of Iraq was, *inter alia*, collaborating with the World Bank to design and launch a fund that would provide financial assistance to the poorest sectors of society. Iraq was evaluating the preparedness of social support mechanisms and civil society organizations in the country's governorates to oversee and ensure the successful implementation of that fund, and expected to conclude that evaluation by the end of 2016. Iraq looked forward to continuing its collaboration with international organizations, particularly the United Nations, with a view to supporting the country's social development.

73. **Mr. Abdrakhmanov** (Kazakhstan) said that in the current context, macroeconomic and social stabilization strategies were needed to achieve social wellbeing. The 2030 Agenda represented a paradigm shift that would require enormous resources: the President of Kazakhstan had proposed, at the seventieth session of the General Assembly, that States should allocate 1 per cent of their annual defence budgets to a special United Nations fund for sustainable development. At the same time, supportive, transparent and accountable public institutions were needed to combat discrimination and social exclusion and ensure rigorous monitoring and assessment of sectors at risk. Policymaking should be democratic and

participatory and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable. In that regard, despite the global economic situation, Kazakhstan had increased annually its funding of programmes for children, youth, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The national Kazakhstan 2050 strategy and the associated economic policy would guarantee improvements in education, healthcare, social housing and social security and seek to modernize and develop the labour market and the information and technology sectors.

74. In its social programmes, the Government promoted the concept of active ageing to ensure that the elderly, who accounted for 10 per cent of the population, enjoyed their rights. Youth participation in national policy and decision-making was ensured through various mechanisms, including a youth congress and a council on youth policy. Kazakh youth had access to free formal education at all levels, as well as vocational training and microloans, and 10,000 Kazakh students had graduated from top-ranking universities abroad thanks to a presidential scholarship programme. Meanwhile a national action plan for 2012-2018 was opening up new horizons for persons with disabilities. In the labour market, jobs for persons with disabilities would be subsidized and a mandated quota system would be introduced.

75. Kazakhstan remained committed to working for food, energy, water and nuclear security, which constituted the four pillars of its successful bid for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2017-2018. It had offered to host a regional hub of the United Nations in Almaty to promote sustainable development, facilitate humanitarian assistance and build resilience nationally and regionally in Central Asia.

76. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that the world was facing the largest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War, with the mass influx of displaced populations adding to the social development challenges of the affected countries. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda required a policy framework based on an inclusive, rights-based approach that ensured persons with or without disabilities and of all ages were integrated into development efforts, especially in light of the ageing of the population. The empowerment of women and gender equality, as well as the provision of decent

education and employment opportunities to youth, were also of paramount importance, and his country would continue to prioritize those issues.

77. The multidimensional approach adopted in Turkey's national development plan had yielded many positive results. Vulnerable groups now had better access to basic health and education, and the coverage of social services had expanded. Unprecedented flows of migrants and refugees were, however, having a direct impact on Turkey's social development agenda. The country was hosting the largest refugee population in the world: over 3 million people. The Government's non-discriminatory "open door" policy continued. All Syrian refugees received protection and free medical services; those living in temporary protection centres were also provided with food and other essentials, as well as health, education, psychological and other support services. Legislation had been enacted to grant Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey access to the Turkish labour market. Greater international cooperation, burden- and responsibility-sharing was needed to assist the displaced, as well as the host countries and communities. Hardship and conflict increased both social and economic vulnerability. It was essential to extend support to countries prone to, and emerging from, conflict and to strengthen the nexus between development and humanitarian activities.

78. **Mr. Djani** (Indonesia) said that, in order to fulfil the 2030 Agenda and increase social mobility, the Committee should focus on reducing inequality and ensuring equal access to employment opportunities, as well as linking social development to disaster risk reduction in order to build societal resilience and social unity.

79. The Indonesian Government had instituted a number of social development programmes to enhance the capacities, income, resilience and welfare of families, which remained the basic social structure and were essential to achieving sustainable development. Indonesia's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women was also reflected in a number of national development strategies, including a national action plan on human rights with policies, inter alia, to combat violence and discrimination against women.

80. With regard to youth, the Government was striving to improve the capacities of youth groups and was encouraging young people not to delay marriage. In addition, educational programmes and coaching for youth groups were being organized through a rural development programme. The Government was also promoting new ways to create youth employment, while expanding and strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises.

81. Furthermore, due to the demographic significance of the elderly in Indonesia, the rights and empowerment of older persons were promoted through the Government's national strategy for the elderly and its constituent programmes.

82. With regard to persons with disabilities, the Government had incorporated disability into its policy frameworks and human rights mechanisms, while the national action plan on human rights emphasized the development of an inclusive environment, increased advocacy and improved facilities, infrastructure, public services, education and socialization.

83. **Mr. Adeoye** (Nigeria) said that the Nigerian Government prioritized the empowerment of people in poverty eradication, social integration, full employment and decent work in its policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. In 2015, the Government had launched an ambitious social protection programme aimed at reducing poverty and creating employment opportunities for people living in poverty. Provision had been made in the national budget for a social development fund aimed at recruiting 500,000 teachers to improve the quality of education in public schools, provide nutritious daily meals for primary school students and improve learning outcomes.

84. As part of efforts to establish inclusive global youth development strategies, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development should serve as the platform for mainstreaming youth issues into the 2030 Agenda. At the national level, Nigeria had launched a national youth development plan to create a platform for the participation of young people in socioeconomic development. In association with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Government had been providing young people in Nigeria with appropriate vocational training, as well as helping them to acquire new skills. Such social

inclusion programmes would lead to social change throughout Nigeria.

85. To incorporate the economic empowerment, full participation and interests of persons with disabilities into all national development programmes and strategies, the Government had appointed a special adviser to the President on persons with disabilities. Furthermore, overarching legislation to ensure full societal integration and create a national commission for persons with disabilities had been approved by the Nigerian House of Representatives.

86. In order to improve the care and well-being of older persons, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing would be used to develop a policy for the elderly while a draft national policy on ageing was undergoing the required legislative processes. Upon completion, those initiatives would help to alleviate poverty, improve living standards and ensure the protection of older persons.

87. Family values remained indispensable to Nigeria's overall political, cultural and socioeconomic development. In addition, Nigeria had integrated human rights into its social development programmes by pursuing effective humanitarian policies. For instance, the Government paid particular attention to the welfare of over two million internally displaced persons from north-eastern Nigeria who were being sheltered in camps nationwide by meeting their immediate humanitarian needs, reducing their vulnerability and increasing their resilience by providing vocational training and skills acquisition programmes.

88. **Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh) said that his Government continued to prioritize the empowerment of its people in its development plan, which included poverty eradication, education, skills development, the elimination of discrimination and extremism, inclusion, participation and the creation of employment.

89. In recent years, Bangladesh had sustained a growth rate in its gross domestic product of over 6 per cent, which had played an important role in eradicating poverty and had been accompanied by an increase in life expectancy and a lower fertility rate, despite the country's high population density. The percentage of the population living below the poverty line had also decreased, while progress had been made in increasing

equitable access to education. The proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation was higher than in other south Asian countries.

90. Despite resource constraints, as well as social, economic and environmental challenges, substantial progress had been made with regard to persons with disabilities, with a particular focus on guaranteeing the right to education of children with disabilities.

91. International cooperation remained crucial, as well as the need to focus on a strengthened, coherent and integrated development approach, including the fulfilment of international commitments on official development assistance and the timely implementation of all commitments under the global partnership for development. It was also important to ensure the effective enforcement of labour laws relating to migrant workers, regarding, *inter alia*, their remuneration, working conditions, health, work safety and freedom of association. Lastly, the role of the Commission of Social Development should be strengthened as a potential platform for following up the social dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

92. **Mr. Solik** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that youth participation in global affairs required the creation of a platform for young people to voice their concerns, the inclusion of those concerns in public policies, the implementation of adequate legislation on the elimination of age-based discrimination and the digitization of learning environments, and the establishment of a transparent and cooperative approach to youth affairs in international organizations. Youth was a valuable asset and youth empowerment should be viewed as a platform for equitable treatment and mutual understanding in order to enhance intergenerational relations.

93. **Mr. Skrzęta** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, as growing up required courage, creativity and the willingness to question accepted practices, young people had the idealism and passion to generate new ideas and should be included whenever change was necessary. The United Nations needed to continue to move forward and deserved to benefit from taking the views of young people into consideration.

94. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that, in recent years, Ukraine had managed to improve maternal health, almost halve child mortality, reduce the incidence rates of HIV/AIDS and make progress in combating tuberculosis. However, social development was a serious challenge for the Ukrainian Government due to the Russian Federation's occupation of Crimea and continuing aggression in the Donbas region, as a result of which thousands of people had been killed or wounded. Critical and civilian infrastructure had been ruined, leaving millions of Ukrainian citizens without a place to live. There were also approximately 1.8 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine, one of the highest figures worldwide.

95. Nonetheless, the Government had established a new Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons and had introduced a comprehensive mechanism to secure social needs and provide access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities. Despite financial difficulties, funds had been allocated from national and local budgets to provide financial support to internally displaced persons. Together with local and international NGOs, as well as other partners, Ukraine was working to foster integration of the internally displaced persons, particularly children who had lost their families in the aggression, and provide them with housing, jobs and other forms of support.

96. Ending the military aggression, establishing peace and restoring the full sovereignty of Ukraine over the Donbas region and Crimea were extremely important in returning normalcy to the lives of millions of people in Ukraine, as well as recovering the economic and social infrastructure in the affected regions.

97. Despite ongoing challenges, Ukraine was working at the national level to fulfil its commitments with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the Goals related to promoting gender equality, combatting corruption, and ensuring a healthy environment and a sustainable energy supply. Furthermore, in recent years, Ukraine had implemented a number of reforms in line with the democratic development path chosen by the Ukrainian people, while the Government was striving to improve social standards. Ukraine planned to implement new programmes and projects to promote microeconomic

stability, an environmental balance and social development.

98. **Mr. Beskoravayny** (Ukraine), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, due to the unprecedented interconnectedness of all nations, individual States could not be indifferent to the problems of others. Speaking from his personal experience, the outcome of peaceful student protests in Ukraine had shown the impact that youth could have on society.

99. While global issues such as youth unemployment, gender equality and discrimination were important in Ukraine, safety concerns had changed the priorities of young Ukrainians, particularly those living in the occupied territories. Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) was particularly important in that regard as it recognized that, without protecting the lives and dignity of young people and engaging them on issues of peace and security, it was impossible to build lasting peace.

100. In summer 2016, youth delegates had organized a volunteer project which provided them with an opportunity to communicate with over 1200 young people from across Ukraine, including the occupied territories. Ukraine's diversity, multiculturalism and multilingualism benefitted both the country and its citizens.

101. Lastly, the international community must continue to protect and support young people, as well as increasing the representation of young people in decision-making at all levels in order to secure peace, and prevent and resolve conflicts.

The meeting rose at 1 15 p.m.



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Seventy-first session

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Third Committee

Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 5 October 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez

(Colombia)

Contents

Agenda item 26: Social development (*continued*)

- (a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)
- (b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 26: Social development (continued)
(A/71/188)

(a) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (continued) (A/71/61-E/2016/7 and A/71/214)

(b) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (continued) (A/71/177)

1. **Ms. Murad** (Brunei Darussalam), noting that 2016 marked the 10-year anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, said that Brunei Darussalam had ratified the Convention on 11 April 2016. The Government was committed to ensuring that issues related to persons with disabilities were prioritized in the national agenda, and to that end several policies and programmes had been put in place to safeguard their rights. The inclusive national education policy did not segregate persons with disabilities, and special needs centres had been established to offer them guidance and skills training with paid allowances. Selected primary and secondary schools had been allocated funding and support to ensure that they provided quality, inclusive education for students with diverse learning needs.

2. With respect to access to health facilities, early detection programmes run by the Ministry of Health provided free services for diagnosis, assessment and treatment services for children. With respect to employment, the number of persons with disabilities hired in both the private and public sectors had increased over the years. Brunei Darussalam had enhanced training programmes for persons with disabilities in order to expand their job opportunities, and had made home- and community-based rehabilitation programmes available for those unable to visit training centres. Social security payments were given to persons with disabilities and their dependents, and supportive therapy was provided to alleviate parental stress.

3. Brunei Darussalam's strong commitment to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities was reflected in the creation in 2008 of a special committee on persons with disabilities and the elderly, which was

in the process of implementing an action plan on persons with disabilities. With a view to furthering a rights-based approach to disability issues, a draft disability order had been formulated to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. Those efforts were complemented by the work of non-governmental organizations and the private sector. At the regional level, Brunei Darussalam worked closely with other member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in promoting the welfare of persons with disabilities, and conferences and workshops focusing on disability issues were held on a regular basis. Given that the Convention had been explicitly mentioned 11 times in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, all 193 Member States, regardless of whether they were parties to the Convention, should incorporate disability issues into their national plans.

4. **Ms. Nunoshiba** (Japan) said that the Government of Japan strongly supported the 2030 Agenda's guiding principle of leaving no one behind. It was important to create a more inclusive society by supporting persons with disabilities and encouraging them to participate in society and by ending discrimination against them. In April 2016, the Government had passed a law that called on administrative bodies and private companies to take concrete measures to eliminate such discrimination. The Government had also expanded its financial assistance for schools that accepted students with disabilities and provided accommodations for them.

5. Over the past 10 years, Japan's numerous contributions to international cooperation on disability issues had included job coaching projects to help persons with disabilities in the workplace. In Malaysia, more than 1,000 individuals had been trained as job coaches and over 650 persons with disabilities had been assisted with their employment needs.

6. In light of the difficulties faced by African countries, such as poverty and social inequality, Japan had held the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993. In the intervening years Japan had made contributions towards economic development and high-quality growth in areas such as improvement of health-care systems, comprehensive education and the empowerment of women. In 2016, the TICAD VI

Summit had been held in Africa for the first time, and Japan had committed to investing approximately 30 billion dollars into health care systems and personnel training for 10 million people over three years, beginning in 2016. In December 2016, Japan would host the third World Assembly for Women, which would address topics such as work-life balance, science and technology and health and sanitation.

7. **Ms. Bhengu** (South Africa) said that Africa was home to the world's poorest people, with some of the highest unemployment rates and the most unequal distribution of wealth. South Africa therefore reaffirmed its commitment to Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, adopted by the African Union, and to the New Partnership for Africa's Development as a blueprint for advancing Africa's social and development agenda. Concerted efforts and continued support by the international community were needed to fulfil the commitments to address Africa's special needs.

8. South Africa continued to grapple with poverty, unemployment and inequality, with youth among the most affected groups, particularly where education was concerned. Those challenges required creative and inclusive policies for investments in youth in order to benefit from the demographic dividend. The South African Government had been exploring ways to create jobs. The health care sector in particular had the potential to generate millions of jobs, given proper investment. Two weeks previously, the Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth had released a report containing recommendations on the creation of health sector jobs, in particular for women and youth.

9. Given the multicultural nature of South African society, no single definition of "family" could be comprehensive enough to cover all forms of families in the country, and social policies were needed to address their various concerns. The Government had issued a White Paper on Families to provide guidelines in that area. In addition, South Africa remained committed to the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

10. **Ms. Karabaeva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that concerted efforts by the international community had resulted in significant progress in global social development and that social rights were now at the heart of the 2030

Agenda for Social Development. However, the required results in areas such as poverty reduction, job creation and improvements to health care and education had not yet been achieved. In addition, complex and coordinated measures were needed to address mass movements of refugees and migrants and escalating inequality.

11. Kyrgyzstan had set labour migration as one of the priorities of its national policy. Remittances sent by labour migrants had a significant effect on the well-being of migrants' families and a considerable portion of them was spent on housing, health and other aspects of social development. Her Government would continue to support efforts by the international community to protect the rights of refugees, migrants and their family members. It had incorporated its commitment to sustainable development into its national sustainable development strategy, while a programme on social protection adopted in 2015 defined key areas of social policy to be improved, including support for children and families living in difficult circumstances, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Kyrgyzstan was making proactive efforts to eliminate poverty, guarantee gender equality, ensure quality and accessible education and involve young people in politics.

12. **Ms. Kydralieva** (Kyrgyzstan), speaking as a youth delegate, said that contemporary problems could not be resolved without the creative potential, energy and enthusiasm of the 1.8 billion young people worldwide. She welcomed the large number of national and global platforms on which young people were able to put forward their views and proposals. In Kyrgyzstan, where 30 per cent of the population were between 14 and 28 years of age, the Government paid close attention to youth issues, as shown by the fact that it had joined the United Nations youth delegate programme in 2016 and had convened the World Youth Kurultai (conference) in August 2016.

13. **Ms. Hamid** (Sudan) said that 2015 had witnessed the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which had all aimed at tackling shortcomings in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, including with regard to social development matters. Those documents had also provided a tighter

framework for ending poverty and promoting full employment and decent work.

14. The daunting challenges facing the world included financial crises, fluctuations in food prices, rising energy prices, climate change, the volatile security situation in many countries, high youth unemployment, global health threats and humanitarian crises. Concerted efforts would be needed internationally to strengthen international cooperation and partnership with a view to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. In furtherance of the commitments made at the Copenhagen Summit, the Government of the Sudan had drafted a national plan to combat poverty that provided for, among other items, the establishment of a fund to support businesses started by graduates, expansion of basic and higher education, eradication of illiteracy, provision of potable drinking water, building of housing for vulnerable populations, expansion of sanitation networks and the achievement of food security.

15. The Diwan al-Zakat social care agency played a leading role in achieving social justice and instilling the values of solidarity and compassion in Sudanese citizens; the Diwan had also supported educational and health care institutions. Special attention had also been given to older persons, with the State facilitating health care treatment for older persons and setting up social programmes aimed at creating a family environment for them.

16. Given the importance of political stability for fostering security and social integration, in April 2014 the President of the Sudan had launched a comprehensive national dialogue and had invited representatives from all segments of Sudanese society to discuss six main priorities, namely peace and unity, the economy, basic rights and freedoms, identity, foreign relations and governance. This initiative would conclude on 10 October 2016 with the adoption of final recommendations.

17. As part of the efforts to achieve equality for persons with disabilities, the Sudan had enacted laws to reinforce their rights, achieve social justice and outlaw discrimination on the basis of disability. An employment and economic empowerment strategy had

been created for persons with disabilities for the years 2015 to 2020, one of the most important aims of which was to combat poverty through employment of persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors, as well as microfinance programmes and funds, the national fund to support persons with disabilities, allocation of funds for social housing, and academic and vocational programmes.

18. **Mr. Barro** (Senegal) said that, in order to accomplish the goals of the 2030 Agenda and face the challenges posed in the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration, there was a pressing need to continue to combat poverty and inequality, to promote decent, productive employment for all and invest in basic social services. To that end, the Government of Senegal had focused on accelerating inclusive economic growth through the Emerging Senegal Plan, which provided a framework for social and economic policy, with consolidation of the rule of law and good governance as the central pillar.

19. In order to overcome structural factors that engendered and perpetuated social marginalization and exclusion, Senegal had focused on promoting sustainable human development through mechanisms to care for the most vulnerable groups and poorest families, while strengthening the capacities of women's organizations. A number of programmes had been initiated, such as the equal opportunity charter, universal health coverage and family security grants. Other programmes had been created to address issues such as gender equality, social protection, microfinance, child vulnerability and women's entrepreneurship, while national and international legal instruments serving as guides.

20. The Government of Senegal was improving the living conditions of older persons by encouraging their full involvement in training and employment. In the education sector, the Literacy and Occupational Apprenticeship Programme to Combat Poverty was designed to increase the literacy rate mainly among rural populations and women through functional competence-based literacy and through access to microfinance. In the area of youth employment, Senegal had created a plan around a national agency for youth employment and a community agriculture programme.

21. **Ms. Buch and Mr. Klausch** (Germany), speaking as youth delegates, described the action young people all over Germany were taking to make the world a better place and the changes that they were seeking. In terms of what they wished to see from the United Nations, they said that equal access to basic resources would provide a strong foundation for youth participation in society; Member States should educate their young people to become global citizens and responsible leaders; the United Nations should follow its own guidelines on youth participation as set out in the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond; and each country should review its youth participation mechanisms. Young people already knew they were the future; they simply needed to be empowered to be responsible, active and hopeful leaders.

22. **Mr. Brown** (Liberia) said that his country was aligning its 18-year national development plan with the Agenda 2030 through inclusive consultations to support ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Equal Representation and Participation Bill had recently been passed by the Lower House of Liberia and, subject to approval by the Upper House, would enable young people and persons with disabilities to add their voices to the decision-making process. Vocational training programmes were being reformed to enhance employability and to address issues such as structural inequalities in the labour market, discrimination and wage disparities.

23. The Liberian Government expected to derive demographic dividends from its youthful population and high fertility and population growth rates. Plummeting prices for its main exports on global markets might present challenges for the implementation of its five-year Agenda for Transformation. Nevertheless, the momentum had not been lost, as current decentralization initiatives had begun to enhance the delivery of social services and his country would continue to rise while adhering to the guiding principle of "leaving no one behind".

24. **Ms. Quiel Murcia** (Panama) said that, given the importance of the social dimension of sustainable development and the ambition to leave no one behind, the 2030 Agenda must be implemented in full. The Panamanian Government had adopted a normative, institutional and operative framework for fulfilment of

the Sustainable Development Goals. A multisectoral commission would address national appropriation and empowerment, while the Social Affairs Office was responsible for coordination among the different institutions. It had also adopted a national strategic plan, "Panamá 2030", which contained a road map setting out targets and indicators for achieving the Goals. In recognition of the benefits of sharing good practices, Panama would be participating in the voluntary national reviews of implementation of the 2030 Agenda taking place in 2017 as part of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

25. Despite the strong economic growth recorded by Panama in recent years, there was still great inequality in the country and poverty levels remained high, especially in rural and indigenous areas. Her Government had prioritized the provision of quality education and the development of social capital with a view to strengthening community leadership and organizational capacity. A multidimensional poverty index was being developed in order to formulate more targeted poverty-reduction policies and strategies. In 2015, Panama had introduced disability certification, while a new national statistical system would centralize data on persons with disabilities to inform policymaking. In addition, the Holy See had announced that Panama would host the next World Youth Day in 2019, which would be a great opportunity to foster a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals. Over 70 per cent of the social budget would be spent on education, health, housing, infrastructure, transport and environment, all with the aim of overcoming poverty, accumulating human capital and achieving environmental sustainability. Panama was committed to continuing to work at the national and global level to combat inequality.

26. **Ms. Bezdekova** (Czechia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people were severely underrepresented in democratic systems and were starting to question democracy because their voices could not be heard. Moreover, children and young people were liable to get lost in the mass of freely available information and be vulnerable to propaganda from extremist and terrorist groups. In response, it was vital to promote quality education, which fostered critical thinking and other valuable skills. Children and young people should also be encouraged to participate in decision-making within the school environment.

27. A university degree was no longer enough to secure a job for young people and could even saddle them with financial burdens. The availability of training opportunities and internships was therefore crucial for the enhancement of youth employability and decent work. Indeed, easier access for young people to the labour market would benefit society at large. Despite efforts made in recent years, the unemployment rate among young people remained alarmingly high. She therefore advocated enhancing collaboration between educational institutions, future employers and relevant stakeholders. In particular, paid internships should be the norm.

28. **Ms. Vuova** (Czechia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that it was impossible to talk about sustainable development without including young people, who represented one half of the world's population. She called on Member States to give young people a platform for expressing their views and participating in decision-making and to involve them further in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Youth empowerment and global prosperity were mutually reinforcing, and it was important to harness the potential of inclusion and diversity. She expressed the hope that one day young people would no longer be considered a vulnerable group but rather a source of inspiration and innovation.

29. **Mr. Kafle** (Nepal) said that despite the significant progress made over recent years, much remained to be done for Nepal to achieve its social development goals. In particular, people-centred development should be prioritized through more effective measures at all levels to eradicate poverty, create jobs, promote inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth and provide social protection. The new Constitution of Nepal fully embraced the principles of human rights, human dignity, inclusion and proportional representation through a rights-based approach, with gender and social issues at its core. It ambitiously broadened the rights of women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and other marginalized communities. Notably, it provided for 33 per cent representation of women in parliament and for gender balance in the most senior elected offices.

30. As a State party to seven core international human rights instruments and to major International Labour Organization conventions, Nepal was

committed to raising levels of economic, social and political inclusion and participation. Its fourteenth development plan focused on reducing poverty, inequality and unemployment and included programmes to enhance the skills of marginalized people. In addition, Nepal had increased targeted programmes that built capacity and promoted skills development, with training and institutional support offered to women, children, girls, persons with disabilities, senior citizens and ethnic minorities. Efforts were also being made to provide children with free compulsory education.

31. **Mr. Nduhura** (Uganda) said that the world was currently witnessing an unprecedented surge in migrants who were seeking new economic opportunities or fleeing armed conflicts, poverty, food insecurity, terrorism or human rights abuses. At the same time, opportunities for asylum were dwindling worldwide. Having learned from experience that no one was a refugee by choice, Uganda had incorporated a refugee protection policy into its national development plan and its new United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The Government supported the move towards a global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees and envisaged that the Ugandan model could contribute to a comprehensive refugee response framework.

32. He called on the international community to address the gap between humanitarian and development assistance; provide support for a settlement transformation agenda to narrow that gap in Uganda's national development plan; and tackle the root causes of the current crisis so that refugees could return to their countries of origin as soon as possible. Both the international community and the countries of origin needed to recognize that the refugee crisis was a transitional, not a permanent, phenomenon.

33. **Mr. Omer** (Eritrea) said that two decades after the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration, millions still languished in poverty. The social development crisis was the result of numerous global challenges, including migration, recurrent conflicts, terrorism and extremism. As Member States worked to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, they should pay attention to what had not worked previously in international development cooperation, in order to

avoid repeating the same efforts and yet expecting different results.

34. The two decades since Eritrea's independence had been a period for rehabilitation, rebuilding, development and healing of the wounds of war. Over that time, Eritrea's vision of social development had been anchored on promoting social justice, with an objective of empowering all of its nationals, and ensuring equitable access to basic social and economic services and opportunities. Education, which absorbed the lion's share of the government budget, had enabled adult illiteracy to soar from under 20 per cent to nearly 90 per cent between 1991 and 2015. The Government had also taken measures to promote equal opportunities, especially in regions which had been disadvantaged in the past. Eritrea was one of the few African countries to have achieved all of its health-related Millennium Development Goals and remained committed to sustaining those achievements and ensuring universal health coverage. The Government had been working closely with the Eritrean War Disabled Veterans' Association to eliminate the stigma of disability and ensure that persons with disabilities had access to medical care, training, rehabilitation, counselling, financial security and employment and could participate in decisions affecting them.

35. Lastly, he highlighted that sanctions and the occupation of Eritrean sovereign territory had hampered progress towards the eradication of poverty. The international community should not continue to ignore those issues.

36. **Ms. Soulama** (Burkina Faso) said that Burkina Faso was striving to include young people, persons with disabilities and older persons in its pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, as reflected in its national social and economic development plan. Burkina Faso had also adopted a national social protection policy in 2012, and more recently, a national solidarity charter aimed at strengthening social cohesion. Other concrete actions designed to reduce inequality included cash transfers for schooling; grants to 500 older persons for income-generating activities; and a national strategy on inclusive education (2016-2020), which was accompanied by a plan of action on education and training for children with disabilities.

37. Burkina Faso, like most other developing countries, also faced challenges in terms of

employment, education and vocational training, in particular since young people under the age of 35 constituted 86 per cent of its population, as well as with regard to the empowerment of women and care of persons with disabilities and older persons. The Government was planning to implement a number of measures that would protect and promote the vulnerable sectors of society. They included giving women greater access to productive resources and promoting their fundamental rights; reducing the number of homeless children by 50 per cent; and establishing a database on persons with disabilities. A law was being adopted on the rights of older persons, and a planned national multisectoral study would be used to develop a national strategy on older persons.

38. **Ms. Grigoryan** (Armenia) said that, in the Copenhagen Declaration, Governments had pledged to put the needs, rights and aspirations of people at the centre of development, and that pledge had been embedded in the 2030 Agenda. However, fulfilment of the new commitments would require more than rhetoric; collective efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda should include and involve people from conflict areas, regardless of the legal status of the territories in which they lived. On the basis of equal rights and self-determination, people were free to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. That was the essence of the notion of leaving no one behind.

39. In 2014, the Government of Armenia had adopted a national strategy on human rights, which provided a platform for sharing responsibility with civil society on the protection and promotion of human rights and sustainable social development. Her Government had also revised its social development strategy, which prioritized the most vulnerable groups and aimed to provide needs-based services.

40. Around 20,000 Syrian refugees had recently sought protection in Armenia. The challenges of receiving and integrating refugees from Syria were high on her Government's agenda; Armenia offered them residence permits and naturalization, while also providing support in areas such as housing, medical care and education.

41. Despite noteworthy progress in social development over the past 25 years, her Government was fully aware of the remaining challenges in the

country, which were the subject of public debate and scrutiny and were significantly compounded by the unilateral, coercive measures used against Armenia, such as closed borders, which continued to severely hamper the advancement of social development.

42. **Mr. Volom** (Hungary), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the participation of youth delegates paved the way to the global recognition of young people in decision-making. He encouraged all Member States that had not yet done so to join the youth delegate programme, so that the outstanding potential of the current generation was not left unfulfilled. Lasting change could be created for marginalized persons only at the grassroots level, and the low social engagement of young people was a worldwide problem that needed to be addressed if the Sustainable Development Goals were to be achieved. The Hungarian Government had set an example by launching programmes to facilitate youth development and strengthening cooperation between the Government, the private sector and civil society. Violent extremist groups were increasingly targeting young people, but efforts to involve young people in socially beneficial activities and help them to set personal goals would help to protect them from radicalization.

43. **Ms. Guzman Madera** (Dominican Republic) said that her Government was seeking to eradicate poverty and overcome inequality through more forceful public policies and wealth redistribution and by creating opportunities for, and defending the rights of, its citizens. Investments in education, health care and youth employment were pillars of the national effort to break the cycle of poverty. Some 400,000 jobs had been created and over 780,000 people had been lifted out of poverty. Gains had also been recorded in adult literacy and 6.3 million persons currently benefited from social security.

44. Sharing the same vision and objectives as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the National Development Strategy of the Dominican Republic sought to secure the full inclusion of the most vulnerable segments of the population. Public policies were in place to protect older persons and enable them to lead an active and productive lifestyle. The Integrated National System for Older Persons recognized that the State, the family and the

community were jointly responsible for protecting the dignity of older persons and enhancing their quality of life. Public prosecutors' offices had been established to deal in a timely fashion with cases of elder abuse. Under the National Accessibility Plan, an enabling environment was being created for persons with disabilities. Faced with unprecedentedly high rates of employment, young people were demanding quality education, decent work and a greater role in decision-making. The international community should draw on their energy and capacity for innovation and their willingness to follow up on the 2030 Agenda.

45. **Mr. Mulugeta** (Ethiopia) said that the conflicts and natural disasters occurring in different parts of the world made it all the more crucial to continue to address development issues through social policy intervention and implementation. The 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change must be fully implemented. Convinced that social development was a prerequisite for inclusive growth and sustainable development, his Government afforded persons with disabilities preferential treatment in health and education services and equal opportunities to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of life.

46. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing had been translated into local working languages so that it could be accessible to the population. Recognizing the family as an agent of development, the Government of Ethiopia had been taking measures to strengthen it in all spheres. The number of educational institutions had increased at all levels and enrolment rates were also higher. His Government continued to address, at the national level, the enormous challenges posed by poverty, unemployment and climate change, and stood ready to work diligently with the international community and development partners, whose contribution remained critical.

47. **Mr. Rafee** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the best way to promote sustainable development was to bring together all segments of society, take into account the concerns of youth and include young people in the development process. Inclusivity was more important than ever in view of the large number of global challenges such as unemployment, extremist ideology, the increase in

terrorist acts, climate change and the deteriorating humanitarian situation. In confronting those challenges, it would be necessary to strengthen cooperation and communication with young people and find new and innovative methods of developing their capacities.

48. Empowering and assisting youth was not only a means of protecting them from poverty and extremism, but also was the best way to harness their energy. Quality education, vocational training and decent jobs were the key tools for empowering youth. The efforts that had been made by the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth were welcome and reflected the commitment of the international community to empowering young people and enlisting their participation in creating a stable world. One initiative taken in the United Arab Emirates to empower youth consisted of youth workshops, where topics of interest to young people could be discussed. The first workshop had been held in April 2016 and had focused on how youth could acquire the skills of the future.

49. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that it was time for Governments to step up efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and the achievement of food security. Noting with concern that over 40 per cent of the world's active youth were either unemployed or working but living in poverty, he said that failure to reverse the negative trend in youth employment could create fertile ground for radicalization and violent extremism. More generally, given the close connection between social development and peace and security, further efforts were needed to find solutions to armed conflicts.

50. A strong economy was not enough to ensure that all segments of the population benefited from economic growth; social justice was only possible if the needs of the most vulnerable population groups were placed at the top of the agenda. Azerbaijan had been one of the fastest growing economies over the past ten years and had translated its success into improved socioeconomic conditions for all, with significant drops in poverty and unemployment rates, new housing for over 250,000 internally displaced persons, and the construction of 3,000 schools and 600 hospitals and health centres. Moreover, a recent reduction in Government revenue had not resulted in

cuts to social spending, but in accelerated diversification of the economy through the establishment of new industrial areas, the creation of agencies to provide housing under favourable conditions for low-income families and support for family businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises.

51. **Ms. Maduhu** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her country had integrated the Sustainable Development Goals in all its national plans and strategies. The second national five-year development plan on the theme "Nurturing industrialization for economic transformation and human development" and the new poverty-reduction strategy for Zanzibar were informed by the outcomes of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. Social protection policies had been adopted to reduce poverty and legal policies and administrative reforms put in place to reduce inequality. Efforts were being made to empower youth, older persons and persons with disabilities to lead full lives within their communities. Older persons had access to fast-track desks in almost all hospitals and benefited from free health care. On the other hand, persons with disabilities were hampered by a severe lack of assistive devices and could not access training and other programmes. Conscious that the primary responsibility of Governments was to ensure the well-being of their people, the Government of Tanzania had mobilized domestic resources and improved institutions but also appealed for greater international cooperation, in particular from the industrialized countries, through official development assistance, trade, debt relief, capacity-building and technical assistance.

52. **Mr. Al Noaimi** (Bahrain) said that the reforms carried out in his country reflected the priority attached to social development. The parliament had adopted an action plan to address social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainable development, the first plan of its kind in Bahrain and the result of constitutional amendments made in 2012. The country's legislators had ensured that it was in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

53. Bahrain had strived to empower families and make them self-sufficient through numerous economic, educational, security and health programmes. The Family Bank provided funding for families and

microprojects, and social development centres provided social solutions and family counselling. The centres provided rehabilitation for family members and helped them to improve their professional and labour skills.

54. Bahrain's social development efforts also addressed the needs of persons with disabilities. In 2007, Bahrain had established a services centre that provided support and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities so that they could enter the labour market and find appropriate jobs. The Ministry of Education had launched programmes to rehabilitate children with disabilities, to adapt schools and universities to their needs and to provide them with transportation. The needs of older persons were addressed through care centres and the provision of medical and psychological services. Bahrain had cooperated with the United Nations Development Programme in Manama to link its social strategies on disability, children and older persons to the goals, targets and indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

55. **Ms. Bellout** (Algeria) said that her country's early achievement of the Millennium Development Goals had resulted in a qualitative leap in human development. Indeed, the national development plans implemented since the year 2000 had targeted several strategic objectives, including poverty reduction, decent job opportunities for all, revitalization of rural areas and reduction of territorial disparities. Investment incentive mechanisms had been established for sectors including agriculture, industry, tourism and small and medium-sized businesses. In conjunction with measures to streamline and speed up administrative procedures, those incentives had triggered a sharp fall in the unemployment rate (from 15.3 per cent in 2005 to 9.7 per cent in 2015). Thanks to its commitment to providing free education, Algeria had seen its school enrolment rate soar to over 95 per cent.

56. Health care was guaranteed for vulnerable populations and, as a result, infant and maternal mortality rates were down. Meanwhile, life expectancy had risen to nearly 76 years. Her country was committed to providing health care and education to persons with disabilities and had adopted laws, regulations and policies to promote and protect older persons.

57. **Mr. Castro Cordoba** (Costa Rica) said that sustainable development could only be inclusive if growth was coupled with equity and the creation of opportunities. A people-centred approach would empower individuals, enabling them to realize their full potential. Equitable access to quality education and decent work was vital, while participation in decision-making processes and in political, social, cultural and economic life was indispensable for the well-being of society. Poverty engendered exclusion and was not just an affront to human dignity but also a form of violation of human rights.

58. Under his country's National Development Plan, inclusive social protection systems provided equitable access to education and health care. Adopting a multidimensional approach to poverty, his Government sought to overcome the various structural development issues, in particular those relating to vulnerable groups. It was committed to combating all forms of discrimination and in particular gender discrimination. The empowerment of women and girls was crucial for eliminating poverty and for sustainable development. Persons with disabilities should be recognized not merely as beneficiaries but also as agents of development, and inclusive policies would be a good investment for the society as a whole. By 2030, older persons would constitute the fastest growing group in the developing countries and their contribution would be vital for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It was important to move towards the adoption of an international convention on the rights of older persons that would provide full protection and enable them to participate fully in the social and economic development of their societies.

59. The family had a fundamental role to play in the formation of non-discriminatory social actors and societies committed to equity and equal rights. The creation of such societies was predicated on the recognition of the widely diverse forms of the family that existed in the modern world.

60. **Mr. Otto** (Palau) said that persons with mental health conditions, owing to discriminatory laws and institutions, were almost always excluded from full participation in economic and social life. The human cost of mental health conditions was staggering and a leading cause of premature mortality, including suicide. Indeed, 75 per cent of suicides occurred in

low- and middle-income countries. Mental health services were often unavailable, but even where they were, many people did not use them out of fear of exclusion and discrimination. According to a World Health Organization estimate, one in four persons would be directly affected by such a condition at some point in their lives.

61. The United Nations should continue to work towards the goals embodied in the 2030 Agenda. Mental wellness could not flourish in conditions of poverty, conflict and injustice. The international community should redouble its efforts to eradicate structural barriers to inclusion, discriminatory laws and practices and stigma, which stripped those with mental health conditions of their fundamental human rights. In addition, efforts should be made to reverse the current situation, in which 85 per cent of people currently needing health services did not receive treatment, so that, by 2030, 85 per cent did receive treatment. Lastly, attitudinal barriers must be overcome.

62. **Mr. Komara** (Guinea) said that there were many outstanding social development challenges, despite the numerous plans of action and recommendations issued by the summits and conferences of the past few decades. Factors such as poor governance and climate change continued to devastate economies and contributed to entrenched poverty and famine, leading to greater inequality and vulnerability.

63. With a view to implementation of the 2030 Agenda, his Government had launched a number of major projects. Among those initiatives, it had worked to secure a nationwide power supply in an effort to boost industrial production and thereby create more jobs for young people; it was building more educational establishments and supporting women's literacy programmes; and it was working on the provision of free maternal and child health care. In addition, as part of a framework agreement with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Guinea was assigning a portion of its mining tax receipts to combating malnutrition. His Government had also formulated a national social development strategy and set up a national pension fund. Furthermore, since inclusive development and improving accessibility were key to promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, it had prepared a guide to their rights, supplied wheelchairs and crutches, and set

up a programme that facilitated access to education for children with disabilities by providing assistive devices.

64. Despite the political will demonstrated by the Government of Guinea, its efforts to further social development had been wiped out by the epidemic of the Ebola virus, which had hit the economy and the health system very hard. With the aim of seeking technical and financial assistance from its bilateral and multilateral partners, Guinea had set up a post-Ebola recovery fund, which had been the subject of a presentation in New York on 22 September by the Minister for Youth.

65. **Ms. Arditi di Castelvetere Manzo** (Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the Order had been active in the humanitarian sphere for over 900 years. It worked around the world to support the vulnerable and marginalized, believing that everyone had the right to live a healthy, dignified life. Every year, it organized an international summer camp for children with disabilities, as well as national-level camps in a number of European countries and Lebanon. It directed numerous specialized centres for the elderly in Europe and the Americas and provided a variety of services to make life at home easier for them. Local activities took place year round and many of the Order's charitable projects were run by its 80,000 volunteers.

66. The Secretary-General's report on the realization of internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and progress made in the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities (A/71/214) had highlighted the impact on exclusion of trends such as climate change and demographic change. The Order's international relief organization was helping vulnerable populations implement disaster risk reduction measures and was assisting in long-term reconstruction and development programmes. Inclusive development and the implementation of the internationally agreed upon development goals for persons with disabilities lay at the heart of the Order's work. The Order was conscious of the synergies between the provision of basic services and social development and would continue to

work towards those goals in partnership with the United Nations community.

67. **Mr. Cassidy** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the note by the Secretariat entitled "World Social Situation 2016: Leaving No One Behind — the Imperative of Inclusive Development" (A/71/188) was consistent with the statement in the ILO report *World Employment and Social Outlook: Transforming jobs to end poverty* that it would not be possible to reduce poverty in a lasting manner without decent work and that, while decent work was a necessary condition for eradicating poverty, it was not sufficient on its own.

68. In adopting the 2030 Agenda, Governments and the international community had recognized that achieving an inclusive world meant addressing several interdependent goals, including the eradication of poverty, the reduction of inequalities, the pursuit of inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all. The world of work was undergoing a profound transformation, owing to, among other factors, technological progress and the changing nature of production.

69. The commitment of ILO to the Sustainable Development Goals had been reinforced at the International Labour Conference of 2016 by the tripartite representatives, who had adopted a resolution entitled "Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work". At the national level, ILO decent work country programmes were embracing the Goals, while at the global level, ILO was aligning its strategic planning cycle to the four-year cycle of the United Nations system. Over the past 12 months, ILO had launched a number of joint initiatives to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They included the Global Initiative for Decent Jobs for Youth, launched in collaboration with 21 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes; the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection, a joint venture with the World Bank as well as several Governments, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations; SDG Alliance 8.7, a global initiative for coordinated action on forced labour, human trafficking and modern slavery; and the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth, an initiative led by Sweden to promote social dialogue and better working conditions in the private sector. Decent work was a pathway to a

just society and a means of ensuring that development efforts were both people-focused and rights-based.

70. **Mr. Shulgin** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, expressed regret that some Member States were exploiting the agenda item on social development to promote narrowly political goals that had nothing to do with development and human rights. Responding to remarks made by the representative of Georgia at the 3rd meeting of the Committee, he said that the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was a choice made by their peoples in response to the aggressive action of Georgia against South Ossetia. Instead of speculating about the fates of thousands of Georgians, Abkhazians and Ossetians and other nationals, the Georgian delegation would do better to strive in earnest for reconciliation and to seek equal and good-neighbourly relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. That would also have a positive impact on the social development of those countries.

71. Responding to remarks made by the representative of Ukraine at the 3rd meeting of the Committee, he said that the delegation of Ukraine had repeated its accusations against the Russian Federation on every possible international platform, giving the impression that its goal was to fuel tensions and create an atmosphere of political hysteria. The delegation had failed to mention that social and other problems of the inhabitants of south-east Ukraine had been caused by the suspension of payments of social benefits and the malfunction of the banking system.

72. Turning to Crimea, he said that it was clearly the desire of Ukraine and its sponsors to cause as much trouble as possible to the inhabitants of Crimea by introducing unilateral sanctions and other restrictions as revenge for the choice made by the population of Crimea. Despite economic and transportation barriers placed by Ukraine, the Crimean economy continued to grow, the tourist industry was developing, welfare payments and public sector salaries were increasing and medical and other infrastructure was being modernized. The Russian Federation was committed to maintaining such progress in the future.

73. **Ms. Dolidze** (Georgia), speaking as a youth delegate and in exercise of the right of reply, said that, despite the misleading statement delivered by the Russian delegation, young people residing in the occupied territories of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali

regions, and more specifically in the Gali district, were being prevented from exercising their fundamental rights to education in their native language, freedom of movement and access to health care.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

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Summary record of the 5th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 6 October 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia)
later: Mr. Glossner (Vice-Chair) (Germany)
later: Ms. Mejía Vélez (Chair) (Colombia)

Contents

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice

Agenda item 107: International drug control

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (A/71/94, A/71/96, A/71/114, A/71/119, A/71/120 and A/71/121)

Agenda item 107: International drug control (A/71/316)

1. **Mr. Fedotov** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), speaking via video link, said that it had been a challenging and important year for international efforts in addressing crime prevention, criminal justice, drug control, corruption and terrorism. The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, held in April 2016, had helped to advance a balanced, integrated and rights-based approach to the world drug problem that addressed such challenges as evidence-based prevention and treatment, access to controlled medicines for pain relief, criminal justice and law enforcement responses that adhered to the principles of proportionality and the rule of law, and mainstreaming issues of gender and youth in drug-related policies and programmes. The outcome document entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" reinforced the global commitment to the three international drug conventions and provided a robust framework for updating the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. In addition, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs was engaged in comprehensive follow-up, with the participation of United Nations entities, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations.

2. UNODC would continue to work closely with other United Nations partners to address the challenges surrounding illicit drugs. The Office was field testing international standards for the treatment of drug use disorders in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and had launched a global campaign on evidence-based drug prevention. As a cosponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNODC was helping to fast-track HIV/AIDS assistance to drug users and inmates. The special session and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had provided new momentum for

alternative development as a means of reducing the illicit cultivation of coca, opium poppy and cannabis as well as improving the socioeconomic conditions of marginalized communities through the provision of legitimate income-earning opportunities.

3. The sixth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption had launched the second cycle of the review mechanism to address prevention and asset recovery. UNODC was also assisting Member States in the implementation of the Doha Declaration, adopted at the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. With the support of Qatar, the concrete follow-up process had focused on strengthening judicial integrity and education for justice, thereby contributing to efforts to achieve Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The upcoming eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime would represent an important opportunity to further strengthen international cooperation against transnational threats, including trafficking in cultural property, piracy and maritime crime.

4. The country, regional and global programmes of UNODC, along with its close partnerships with United Nations agencies, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and others, aided in developing capacities in intelligence-led policing, crime scene management, special investigative techniques, forensics, financial investigations and border management, as well as inter-agency, regional and interregional cooperation to promote information sharing and multilateral operations targeting serious crime and illicit financial flows. In response to requests from Member States and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on terrorism and violent extremism, UNODC was further strengthening its services in legal assistance and capacity-building to address the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and the links between organized crime and terrorism.

5. UNODC also continued to provide the international community with the highest level of research and analysis in areas under its mandate. The World Drug Report 2016 explored the issues of drugs and sustainable development and provided a better understanding of how to integrate drug policy and

development interventions. The first World Wildlife Crime Report, also released in 2016, had revealed the vulnerabilities of wildlife and forests to crime. The biennial Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, to be released in November 2016, would highlight the need to address criminal abuse and exploitation in the context of the current refugee and migrant crisis. UNODC would continue to support Member States in implementing the two supplemental protocols to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in order to promote justice and protect victims of human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

6. UNODC was committed to providing support to Member States while seeking to use its budget efficiently, increase accountability and transparency, adhere to results-based management and independent evaluation, mainstream a gender perspective across its work and mandates and promote geographic representation and gender equality in its staff. Extrabudgetary funding had tripled in the past decade but unearmarked contributions had fallen drastically, and UNODC received less than 1 per cent of the overall regular budget of the United Nations. In response, the Office had introduced a full cost-recovery model, in line with United Nations Secretariat policies, but was still struggling to ensure the sustainability of some of its country and regional offices, which were crucial to the fulfilment of its mandate. UNODC needed more regular budget resources as well as funds from other sources in order to manage core activities and institutional initiatives, conduct normative work and research and respond swiftly to calls for action from Member States.

7. **Mr. Ríos Sánchez** (Mexico) said that there must be collaboration and coordination among all United Nations agencies, as well as communication with the General Assembly. The World Drug Report placed a particular emphasis on the supply and availability of new psychoactive substances; however, there should also be a deeper analysis of demand and consumption. The momentum from the commitments made at the special session must be maintained.

8. **Mr. Ruiz Blanco** (Colombia) said that his delegation appreciated the work that UNODC had undertaken in Colombia to reduce demand, promote alternative development, strengthen the justice system and combat trafficking in persons. It welcomed the

decision made by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to hold four meetings in October 2016 and devote one day to the implementation and follow-up of the outcomes of the special session. He asked what actions UNODC had been carrying out with other United Nations agencies to ensure the collective, efficient implementation of the recommendations from the special session.

9. **Mr. Fedotov** (Executive Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), said that new psychoactive substances were one of the major challenges mentioned in the outcome document of the special session. UNODC would therefore continue to collaborate with the International Narcotics Control Board and WHO in the area of new psychoactive substances and assist countries in developing strategies to meet that challenge through legislation and international cooperation and coordination.

10. UNODC was committed to working closely with its partners in other United Nations agencies. The Office was field testing international standards for the treatment of drug use disorders, which had been adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in partnership with WHO and was working closely with the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations under its partnership with UNAIDS. In addition to implementing country and regional programmes, UNODC carried out work as part of the United Nations country teams, in accordance with the delivering as one initiative. In promoting alternative development, which focused on the development of infrastructure and facilities to provide farmers with alternatives, UNODC relied on the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), international financial institutions and other international partners.

11. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that CARICOM member States faced significant challenges to achieving sustainable development and maintaining socioeconomic stability as a result of transnational organized crime, especially trafficking in drugs and persons, the illicit trade in small arms and ammunition and money-laundering. The small island developing States, which had high debt burdens and operated in tight fiscal environments, were forced to divert resources from pressing development activities such as education, healthcare and infrastructure development

to address crime. In addition, criminal activity robbed the region of the contribution of youth, its largest human resource group. CARICOM aimed to open opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship so that people, youth in particular, could become more resilient to the lure of organized criminal gangs. Greater effort should be placed on addressing the root causes of crime in order to more effectively counter its appeal and reduce its occurrence.

12. CARICOM had continued to combat illegal activities through the CARICOM Crime and Security Strategy and through cooperation with key partners, including the European Development Fund and UNODC. Training of border officials had continued under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, and capacity-building had been strengthened in areas such as detection, interdiction and risk management in order to enhance regional border security. CARICOM called on its development partners to continue to provide and expand international cooperation, information sharing, capacity-building and technical assistance in support of its efforts to comprehensively reduce criminal activities, improve criminal justice responses and create peaceful and inclusive societies. Money-laundering and other financial crimes required a collective response from the international community. CARICOM fully supported compliance with the highest standards of oversight and accountability in the global financial system; however, the response to those regulations must be balanced and proportionate. Many CARICOM member States were vulnerable because some correspondent banks and Europe and North America were unwilling to risk the high fines and other penalties arising from the potential illicit activities conducted by third-party clients. A reasonable solution could be found to safeguard the international financial system while ensuring the continued viability and participation of small economies and their indigenous banks in the global financial system.

13. The special session had provided a good opportunity to engage in fruitful dialogue on existing measures to address the world drug problem and determine operational recommendations for the future. The outcome document of the special session had not fully met the ambitious expectations of CARICOM member States, and the process of drafting the outcome document had not adequately facilitated the effective participation of small delegations, in particular

CARICOM member States that did not have permanent representation in Vienna. The world drug problem posed a multidimensional challenge that required a multifaceted and comprehensive response. Drug control policies should always maintain a focus on health and well-being, as established in the three international drug conventions. CARICOM supported balanced and effective drug control policies to reduce supply and demand; ensure availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes; strengthen international cooperation against trafficking, money-laundering and other associated criminal activities; balance development and socioeconomic concerns; uphold human rights and justice; and take into account emerging realities, trends and circumstances at the national, regional and global levels. CARICOM looked forward to discussions on the implementation of the outcome document of the special session and other measures. The General Assembly should give early consideration to determining the follow-up to the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, set to expire in 2019. UNODC required adequate, predictable and stable resources to fulfil its mandate, in particular with regard to supporting the capacity-building requirements of Member States and cooperation with regional bodies.

14. **Mr. Teo** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the ASEAN ministerial meeting on transnational crime met regularly to coordinate initiatives and respond to emerging issues, and the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime had strengthened the region's capacity to combat transnational terrorism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, money-laundering, trafficking in persons, cybercrime and sea piracy. The ASEAN Convention on Trafficking in Persons had been signed at the twenty-seventh ASEAN Summit, held in 2015. The ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children had recently launched a review of regional laws, policies and practices with a view to providing an accurate and updated assessment of human trafficking in the region and determining best practices and recommendations for action. The ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism aligned the region's efforts with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

as well as relevant United Nations resolutions and conventions.

15. In 2014, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime had established a dedicated working group on cybercrime to restructure and enhance regional efforts. In 2016, Singapore would host the Singapore International Cyber Week, which would feature an ASEAN ministerial conference on cybersecurity to discuss strategies for enhanced response, confidence-building and capacity-building. There would also be an ASEAN cybercrime prosecutors' roundtable meeting to serve as a platform for knowledge sharing.

16. Since the commitment made in 2012 to achieve a drug-free region, ASEAN leaders had maintained a zero-tolerance approach to drugs and continued to implement additional regional mechanisms to combat the drug problem. The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem had been an important milestone in the review of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, due to take place in 2019. The implementation of the recommendations in the outcome document of the special session would bolster national and regional efforts to achieve a drug-free society. ASEAN strongly supported a focus on the three international drug conventions, which remained relevant and would continue to serve as a cornerstone of the global drug policy. Each State should determine and implement the policies that best catered to its individual needs based on its unique circumstances and societal norms, as there was no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing the drug issue.

17. ASEAN pledged its continued support to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and looked forward to continuing its cooperation with the United Nations, in particular with UNODC, to share best practices and determine effective strategies to eradicate illicit drugs and international crime.

18. *Mr. Glossner (Germany), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

19. **Mr. Wafy** (Niger), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group continued to work towards reducing crime levels and had made progress in pursuing regional approaches to international criminal justice and applying regional and international conventions. African States had shown resolve in settling conflicts within their borders with

support from the international community and continued to improve on important benchmarks of good governance, the rule of law and constitutional order. Many African States found it challenging to effectively deal with crime due to their vast, porous borders, coastlines, poorly regulated airfields, weakened governance infrastructure and limited law enforcement capacity. UNODC and the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders had provided technical support to many African States and should continue to receive international support. The Group was concerned that the inadequate finances of the Institute had greatly affected its capacity to effectively deliver services to African Member States and called on the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to mobilize the financial resources necessary to maintain the Institute with the core professional staff required to effectively fulfil its mandate. The Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC had increased support for training in countering the financing of terrorism and strengthening regional and international cooperation.

20. Drug trafficking and drug use continued to be a major social and health challenge facing many developing countries across the globe. In Africa, the situation was further exacerbated by high levels of income inequality, a high rate of urbanization, low levels of criminal justice resources, wars and civil conflicts and weak controls over criminal activities. Youth, who were mostly undereducated and unemployed, were vulnerable to recruitment in the drug trafficking chain. The fifth session of the African Union Conference of Ministers for Drug Control had adopted the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017) in order to improve health, security and socioeconomic well-being of people in Africa by reducing illicit drug use, trafficking and associated crimes. The plan of action complemented the existing initiatives of the African Union Commission to address organized crime. Despite those efforts, production, trafficking and use of illicit drugs continued to be a growing challenge in Africa. Although production mainly focused on cannabis, there was an emerging threat of locally manufactured amphetamine-type stimulants. In addition, African States had seen an increase in the trafficking and consumption of stolen or counterfeit prescription drugs and precursor chemicals containing controlled

substances and were increasingly being used for the transit of heroin to final destinations in other regions. Insufficient and unreliable information and limited treatment options further compounded those issues. National health-care systems lacked the financial resources to adequately meet treatment demands. Weak and under-resourced criminal justice systems and relentless attempts by criminal groups to intimidate and corrupt officials often hampered efforts to curtail the illicit drug trade, and drug offenders, including those accused of minor infractions, represented a disproportionately high percentage of people in pretrial detention and prison. To address those challenges, the Group had galvanized national and international cooperation to support the implementation of the regional Plan of Action. Member States had established or were in the process of establishing integrated national programmes to combat drug trafficking, drug use and associated transnational organized crime in collaboration with UNODC.

21. The Group reiterated that the main objective of drug policies should be to improve the health, safety, welfare and socioeconomic well-being of people and societies by adopting appropriate measures to combat illicit crop cultivation, production, manufacture, transit, trafficking, distribution and use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Group highlighted the urgent need to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing connections between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime, terrorism and money-laundering, and called on the international community to strengthen its resolve to address those challenges by adopting appropriate and sustainable policies.

22. **Mr. O'Brien** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilisation and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the special session had allowed the international community to progress towards a more balanced, comprehensive and coherent approach to the world drug problem, recognizing the key objectives of respect for human rights, promotion of public health and the need for balance in reducing

both drug demand and supply. The progress made at the special session, along with the outcome document, should be the basis for discussions in the 2019 revision of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

23. The European Union welcomed the call, in the outcome document, to provide access to risk and harm reduction measures, such as medication-assisted therapy programmes, injecting equipment programmes, antiretroviral therapy and other interventions that prevented the transmission of HIV. The recommendations in favour of availability and access to controlled medicines for pain relief and suffering also marked a step forward in the international strategy to address the world drug problem. Gender and age perspectives must be appropriately mainstreamed in drug policies, as the different needs of women, children, youth and other vulnerable groups required specific attention. Collaboration with civil society was essential in drug policy formation, follow-up and implementation, and must be guaranteed in the 2019 revision process. The outcome document of the special session also called on Member States to promote proportionality in sentencing for drug offenses and to implement alternative measures of punishment. The European Union and its member States were opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug offenses, and regretted that the outcome document did not include language on capital punishment, despite the fact that a significant number of countries were taking steps to reduce its imposition.

24. The drugs market remained one of the most profitable criminal markets. European Union member States acknowledged their responsibility to counter the threats related to being countries of destination, production and transit and, for the past six years, had applied the European Union policy cycle for organized and serious international crime to complement the targeted work of law enforcement agencies. The European Union supported the recommendations made at the special session for enhanced cooperation on drug supply reduction and hoped to see more measures applied in practice that would address the vulnerabilities enabling organized crime; enhance cooperation in criminal matters, including judicial cooperation; and focus on the individuals and organizations responsible for illicit activities on a larger scale and the resulting illicit financial flows. The European Union was pleased that the special session

had recognized the reality of new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet as a large marketplace for those drugs and other drug-related criminal activity. Access to research, evaluation and monitoring was vital to ensuring more effective decisions on drug policies, which should be built upon an integrated, balanced and evidence-based approach supported by objective monitoring and evaluation systems. Alternative development should be promoted as a sustainable and holistic approach to tackle the root causes of the illicit cultivation of drug crops. As long as poverty, limited access to legal markets and weak rule of law persisted, the effectiveness of any intervention would be limited. The European Union welcomed the growing engagement of the private sector to provide viable alternatives to the cultivation of illicit crops. The special session had recognized the need to ensure appropriate financing for alternative development and had called for drug policy to be placed in a wider socioeconomic context and brought in line with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

25. The European Union encouraged the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to promote open debate and the free exchange of information and welcomed the involvement of a wider circle of relevant United Nations bodies, such as UNODC, WHO, UNAIDS, and UNDP, as well as civil society and the scientific community. Priority should be given to actions based on the recommendations of the special session. The European Union was strongly committed to exchanging information and experiences in order to foster the implementation of all special session operational recommendations and monitor developments and results.

26. *Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) resumed the Chair.*

27. **Mr. Brownfield** (United States of America) said that the Third Committee played a unique role in assisting Member States in the promotion of fair, effective and accountable criminal justice systems. In addition to the adoption of the resolution by the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on restorative justice in criminal matters, the international community was putting Goal 16 into practice by promoting access to legal aid and creating new tools, resources and networks for criminal justice practitioners around the world. The eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations

Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to be held in Vienna in 2016, would allow experts to break down barriers to cross-border investigations and prosecutions of transnational organized criminals.

28. At the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, the international community had advanced a comprehensive, balanced approach to international drug policy. It was now time to implement those recommendations by enhancing the collaboration between health and criminal justice sectors at all levels. Supply and demand for drugs must be reduced simultaneously, and there must be a dramatic increase in the availability of effective prevention and evidence-based treatment efforts.

29. Synthetic drugs, which were extremely profitable and easy to make, were one of the most alarming emerging drug threats. The international community must accelerate the scheduling of the myriad of synthetic substances and the precursor chemicals used to make them. The United States of America and other countries faced an epidemic of opioid abuse, including the use of the synthetic drug fentanyl and its analogues, which could turn low-grade heroin into a drug with an incredibly potent high. International control regimes and law enforcement must do more to address the magnitude of that growing challenge.

30. The international community had a common, shared responsibility to work together in order to achieve the goals of improving justice systems, fighting transnational organized crime and decreasing the damage caused by drugs.

31. **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt) said that crime prevention and the establishment of a humane justice system were key elements for sustainable development. Egypt respected all of its commitments as a party to international and regional conventions on drug trafficking, organized crime and corruption. UNODC should be provided with adequate, predictable and stable resources, including additional regular budget resources as well as voluntary contributions, to enable it to respond effectively to the increasing demand for technical assistance. Egypt coordinated with the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, which provided technical assistance in trafficking in persons, the fight against drug addiction and corruption and juvenile justice. The Regional Office for West and Central Africa, which played an important role in

fostering peace in the region, was facing financial difficulties. She invited the international community to support the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

32. A neutral, transparent implementation review mechanism was needed for the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols. International cooperation in the fight against terrorism must be consolidated, and international efforts must be coordinated. Egypt contributed to that work as a member of the Security Council and as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. Many countries were facing war and unprecedented numbers of refugees. Countries of origin, transit and destination must cooperate to assist the victims of crimes, especially women and children. The Government welcomed the efforts made by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and believed that more emphasis should be placed on the celebration of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons at the end of July.

33. The special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem had provided an opportunity to review the progress made in implementing the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action in order to develop the global strategy to address the world drug problem, which should evaluate progress within the framework of the three international drug conventions and other international instruments.

34. **Ms. Mukhametzyanova** (Russian Federation) said that, as organized crime evolved, the international community needed to continue to enhance the framework governing multilateral cooperation by adopting new international legal instruments that took into account new types of criminal activity. It was also important to continue efforts towards launching an intergovernmental, non-politicized implementation review mechanism of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to be financed from the regular budget. The Government supported the efforts of UNODC to combat criminal activity and believed that its research potential should be strengthened. The Russian Federation also supported strengthening international anticorruption efforts based on the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Other international activities should not replace the United Nations mechanism, but rather complement it.

Asset recovery could be a prospective subject for a new international legal instrument. The review mechanism of the Convention against Corruption had proven to be an effective instrument for international cooperation and did not require any revision. The international community must strictly comply with the fundamental principles of the review mechanism, which was intergovernmental in nature.

35. The Government was concerned by the spread of new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet in drug smuggling. It was imperative for States to fully and effectively implement the three international drug conventions, the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action as well as the outcome document of the special session. The Russian Federation was categorically opposed to any initiatives aimed at revising the existing international system of drug control, including the legalization of certain types of drugs and supported the central coordinating role of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the main policymaking body in that area. In the upcoming review of the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, the Government was firmly opposed to the creation of expert groups or other consultative bodies which would duplicate the work of the Commission. The powers of the Commission must not be redistributed to other United Nations bodies and agencies.

36. The drug threat emanating from Afghanistan continued to jeopardize international peace and stability and deserved special attention. The situation was further compounded by the increasing connections between criminal groups and international terrorist networks, primarily through financing derived from Afghan opiate trafficking. The drug problem in Afghanistan must be monitored and analysed by United Nations agencies in order to take targeted measures to destroy drug crops and laboratories and stem drug flows. Mechanisms developed with the participation of the Russian Federation could be helpful, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The Afghan drug problem could only be addressed through the joint efforts of the international community to eradicate drug production and drug infrastructure.

37. **Mr. Joshi** (India) said that the outcome document of the special session had been a landmark

development in global drug policy, containing concrete operational recommendations based on the principle of common and differentiated responsibilities and a public health approach while reaffirming the centrality and relevance of the three international drug conventions. The international community must honour the commitments made at the special session to promote long-term, balanced drug control policies and programmes with a focus on sustainable development.

38. The Government of India strongly supported the Paris Pact initiative of UNODC and worked to combat the drug problem with concrete national policies and memoranda of understanding with neighbouring countries. The prime minister had put forth an initiative that focused on better health and rehabilitation services, greater awareness in schools and colleges and stringent enforcement of anti-drug-trafficking measures. A committee and an online monitoring system had been established to confront the emergence of new psychoactive substances. The challenge of determining the scale of illicit manufacturing operations would require capacity-building and technical assistance, particularly for developing countries.

39. Measures must be put in place to limit drug abuse without affecting its legitimate use, particularly for medication. As a supplier of opiate raw material and a longstanding cultivator of licit opium, India had endeavoured to uphold its responsibilities in accordance with the principles of the three international drug conventions, including the principle of balance.

40. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations must be condemned and dealt with in the strongest terms. India had a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism and those who aided and abetted terrorist acts and provided safe havens to their perpetrators. Transnational organized crime continued to threaten the rule of law and was an impediment to peaceful and inclusive societies and the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Drug trafficking and money-laundering to finance criminal activities and terrorism remained one of the most serious challenges facing the world.

41. The principle of rule of law was paramount. India was a party to all major United Nations conventions relating to crime, trafficking, corruption, anti-money-

laundering and countering the financing of terrorism and had bilateral agreements with a number of countries. In addition, the Government was committed to implementing the 2010 Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and was a member of the Financial Action Task Force. The international community must deal with the perpetrators of cybercrime more effectively and unite to prevent crimes against cultural heritage and national monuments committed by fundamentalists. India was fully committed to working closely with other countries and UNODC to achieve a world free of illicit drugs, narcoterrorism and organized crime.

42. **Mr. Gómez Camacho** (Mexico) said that drug control was a priority for his country, which had paid a high price in the lives of its citizens. Mexico had experienced first-hand the limitations and consequences of the current model, which had not managed to curb production, trafficking or consumption of drugs in the world. At the special session, his Government had called for a review of international strategies and for better options that would focus on the well-being of humankind. Improved coordination among United Nations agencies, such as UNODC, WHO, UNDP, and UN-Women and the International Narcotics Control Board, would provide States with the support needed to implement better anti-drug strategies and policies that aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

43. Affected communities must be supported, with opportunities for alternatives in education, work and recreation to strengthen inclusion and social cohesion. The prohibition model, with its many limitations, should be replaced by a perspective focused on human rights and public health, with proportional punishments and alternatives to incarceration. The Government rejected the imposition of the death penalty in any circumstance. The international community must combine its efforts to prevent drug consumption, through campaigns directed at children and youth, and to ensure availability and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, including pain relievers. It was unacceptable that 90 per cent of pain medication was consumed in only 10 countries.

44. **Mr. Ruiz Blanco** (Colombia) said that the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug

problem should not be seen as the end of a process, but rather as the beginning of a transformation in the drug policy that would put an end to the long war on drugs, which had focused a disproportionate amount of resources on repressive strategies that had impacted the weakest sectors of society. The international community must abandon indiscriminate repressive measures, budgets disproportionately focused on punitive strategies and national policies that neglected the most vulnerable sectors and move towards a new consensus based on human rights, public health and well-being, security and development.

45. The consensus reached at the special session did not address all facets of the problem, but was the most comprehensive agreement reached thus far. Assuming that it was impossible to achieve a world free of drugs, efforts could be focused on more realistic goals, such as avoiding their abuse and minimizing their harmful consequences. Such goals would clearly encompass the protection of human rights and align with the 2030 Agenda, two aspects that had not been a priority in the drug policy. There must also be flexibility for countries to apply drug policies in accordance with their own situations.

46. Columbia would continue to tackle organized crime, replacing illicit crops with licit crops and intercepting ships and planes that trafficked drugs. The fight against drugs was not only a moral imperative for Columbia, it was a matter of national security, and the Government would continue to strive to achieve peace with guerrilla groups that had taken part in the drug trafficking chain, turning them into allies who could help eradicate illicit crops and promote alternative activities.

47. **Ms. Rodriguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that the fight against transnational trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, money-laundering operations, arms smuggling and terrorism required robust international cooperation based on full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and in accordance with national laws. The fight against crime must go hand-in-hand with the fight for development and the establishment of a more just, democratic and equitable international order.

48. Of all the forms of transnational organized crime, drug trafficking had the highest social and human cost. Drug abuse and dependency not only posed a serious

health problem, but also threatened security and economic and social progress and perpetuated the cycles of poverty, violence, criminal behaviour and social exclusion. The principle of common and shared responsibility was imperative; it would be very difficult to resolve the problem of drug production and trafficking in the impoverished South without eliminating demand in the developed North. Furthermore, the problem would not be solved by militarizing countries, levelling farms, legalizing drugs or classifying them as harmless substances.

49. The Government was opposed to discussions and actions that could damage the current drug control regime. It supported the current legal framework and the three international drug conventions and highlighted the importance of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the principle United Nations body governing the world drug problem. Cuba had a zero-tolerance policy on drug production, consumption and trafficking. The Government had established prevention programmes that focused on healthcare, rehabilitation and social reintegration as a way to counteract drug addiction.

50. Cuba collaborated with international partners and complied with all international obligations in the fight against organized crime. The country was a party to the 16 international instruments on combating terrorism and rigorously complied with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), under which it had submitted numerous reports. Nearly 3,500 Cuban citizens had lost their lives and nearly 3,000 had been maimed by terrorist attacks against Cuba in over half a century, and yet, several of the confessed perpetrators of those acts lived with impunity. Cuban territory had never been used nor would it ever be used to organize, finance or carry out terrorist acts against any country and Cuba rejected unilateral lists of countries that had supposedly committed violations relating to transnational organized crime, as the compilation of such lists was contrary to international law.

51. The Cuba Adjustment Act and the so-called "wet foot, dry foot" policy were still in effect, encouraging illegal and unsafe migration and trafficking of Cuban citizens to the United States which had caused a large number of deaths since its promulgation and had created difficulties for countries in the region.

52. **Mr. Saikal** (Afghanistan) said that terrorism and violent extremism was by far the greatest and most menacing challenge facing the international community. Terrorists groups continued to affect peace, security, social order and economic development. As his country had seen over the last two decades, the threat posed by terrorism, in connection with other criminal activities and drugs, was real and growing quickly. The international community must put aside its differences and utilize all available resources to combat the problem. The United Nations could play an important role in developing a better, more feasible international approach to terrorism and violent extremism by further strengthening the global regime, with a focus on those who used terrorism and militant extremism as a political weapon to further their hegemonic ambitions. Illicit drugs facilitated other forms of transnational organized crimes and continued to undermine stability and economic development. The connection between the illicit drug trade and terrorist groups in the region had contributed to the security challenges in Afghanistan, as drug-related proceeds were used to fuel violence in the country.

53. According to UNODC reports, the bulk of opium poppy cultivation and opiate production occurred in the provinces with the poorest security and the least-developed economy and infrastructure. The Government of Afghanistan had taken a number of steps to address the problem and had succeeded in reducing opiate production by 11 per cent and poppy cultivation by 19 per cent since 2015. The national plan of action focused on law enforcement, education and public health in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Over the next five years, the Government would continue to provide alternative livelihoods for farmers while strictly enforcing laws against money-laundering and drug trafficking.

54. The Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, which supported the national plan of action, had marked a new phase of mutual commitment between the Government and the international community and stressed the need for a sustained and integrated approach in order to effectively reduce the illicit production and trafficking of narcotics and precursor products and fight organized crime. The effects of drug cultivation, production, trafficking and consumption were vast and devastating and required a

comprehensive, global and unified response focused on trade, trafficking, production and consumption. The people and Government of Afghanistan were strongly committed to continuing their efforts to build upon the achievements of the last 16 years and to lay a new foundation for progress and advancement for future generations.

55. **Ms. Sandoval** (Nicaragua) said that the Nicaraguan model was a humble contribution to regional peace and security, and yet it was the country's main contribution to the international community. Crime prevention and criminal justice agencies formed part of a system that was based on citizen participation. Government policy aimed to build a State that promoted Christian values, socialist ideals and solidarity. That meant advancing policies that strengthened the family and developing programmes that promoted, protected and restored human rights, with special attention to women, children, youth and the elderly. The Nicaraguan model served as a retaining wall against drug trafficking, focused on citizen and human security, established a national campaign for a drug-free Nicaragua and benefited from a highly effective criminal justice system.

56. The world drug problem was a serious threat to peace and State sovereignty. It undermined socioeconomic and political stability and sustainable development. The Government of Nicaragua acknowledged the full validity and relevance of all United Nations conventions on drugs and called for their effective implementation. Deregulation and legalization of drugs were not viable options; those policies would lead to increased drug use and were contrary to the provisions of current international drug control instruments. The world drug problem must be addressed while respecting each nation's specific situation, priorities and legal system, in strict compliance with the United Nations Charter and international law. The Government reaffirmed the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and encouraged the broadest international cooperation, including the exchange of experiences and good practices and the provision of greater financial and logistical resources to transit countries.

57. The world drug problem continued to present global and regional challenges to security, health and well-being. The international community needed to

implement public policies and strategies that would focus on human beings, family and the community, within the principle of sovereign security. The Government rejected unilateral lists and certifications and similar measures and invited all countries to reflect on the world drug problem and analyse and discuss effective measures that would strengthen international action to find solutions.

58. **Ms. Nescher-Stuetzel** (Liechtenstein) said that human trafficking and modern slavery were grave violations of human rights and obstacles to sustainable development that threatened peace and security, especially when proceeds were used to finance terrorist activities and fuel armed conflicts. Liechtenstein, together with the United Nations University, the United Kingdom and civil society partners, had hosted a seminar whose report outlined 10 suggestions for action to be taken by the Security Council and other bodies. Follow-up action to the seminar would focus on disrupting illicit financial flows and using relevant data for criminal prosecutions. The Government of Liechtenstein would continue to promote the greater involvement of international justice mechanisms where national judiciaries systematically failed and looked forward to participating in the review of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

59. Her delegation was disappointed that the outcome document of the special session reflected a status quo heavily based on a punitive approach, which had not proven successful. The international drug control framework should address the health and welfare of humanity; however, the World Drug Report had found that current drug policies had shifted precious resources away from public health to law enforcement. The current regime was outdated and facilitated lucrative and violent criminal black markets while criminalizing and marginalizing drug users. The 2019 review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action would provide the international community a chance to change course. The application of the death penalty for drug offences was a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as drug offences were not among the most serious crimes. Moreover, evidence continued to show that capital punishment was not a deterrent. Liechtenstein therefore called for the universal abolition of the death penalty. The flagrant human rights violations committed by countries employing extrajudicial killings to combat

drug use and drug trafficking were even more alarming and could amount to crimes against humanity.

60. Her delegation welcomed the language condemning corruption in all its forms and at all levels in the resolution on preventing and combating corrupt practices, which amounted to recognition of how bribery undermined the ability of millions of individuals to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms. In the past, technical language had overshadowed the effects of corruption on human rights. If the international community was serious about crime prevention, criminal justice and drug control, the underlying human rights violations needed to be acknowledged and prevented.

61. **Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) said that his country was firmly committed to working to combat the illicit drug trade, which was a central theme of its foreign policy. The world drug problem was a challenge that negatively impacted public health and the quality and well-being of communities; undermined sustainable development, judicial systems, political and economic stability and democratic institutions; and threatened security, democracy and governance around the world. The illicit drug trade was bolstered by its connection with other transborder crimes, such as illegal logging, trafficking in persons and illegal mining. At the same time, the consumption of drugs and the vulnerability of dependent drug abusers caused suffering for drug users, their families and their communities, and posed a serious danger to the health, dignity and well-being of humankind. The situation had worsened due to a surge in new psychoactive substances, new and expanding routes for transnational trade and harm caused to the environment. The international community must unify under the principle of common and shared responsibility, ensuring an equitable commitment to counter the different manifestations of the drug problem and strengthen drug control capacities for all countries.

62. The national strategy to combat drugs for 2012-2016 was currently being updated for the period of 2017-2021, with a significant national investment and support from the international community. The strategy had yielded positive results in all areas of its intervention, including drug prevention, chemical control and prohibition, and had reduced the amount of illicit crops in Peru, an achievement that had only been possible with

the commitment made by all social actors to comprehensive and sustainable alternative development.

63. Anti-drug policies should be framed by the three international drug conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments and must address equally all of the pillars of the strategy: the reduction of supply and demand, comprehensive and sustainable alternative development, the fight against money-laundering, judicial cooperation and a focus on addressing other related crimes. The international community must promote a comprehensive, balanced, multidisciplinary and sustainable approach based on scientific evidence and full respect for human rights. Any one component should not be prioritized over another. Peru shared the position of many countries that, in the past, too much emphasis had been placed on security to the detriment of issues such as public health. The outcome document of the special session recognized that the world drug problem continued to be a common and shared responsibility, which must be tackled in a multilateral environment with more effective international cooperation.

64. **Mr. Dapkiunas** (Belarus) said that, with regard to crime prevention and criminal justice, the eighth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime would provide an important opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the Convention and its protocols since the last conference had been held in 2014. Particular attention should be paid to determining future measures to counter transnational organized crime in the context of the 2030 Agenda and to efforts to counteract new and emerging threats, such as organ trafficking, cybercrime, modern piracy, illicit trafficking in cultural property and environmental crimes. Belarus hoped that an agreement could be reached regarding the implementation review mechanism of the Convention and its protocols. The Government welcomed the efforts of UNODC to assist States in implementing the supporting Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and supported the coordinating role of the Office in the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons. Efforts to counter human trafficking depended on the effective implementation of the Protocol and other instruments, including the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. In 2017, the United Nations would hold a high-level meeting to

assess the progress in implementing the Global Plan of Action. The meeting would serve as an opportunity to identify problems and challenges in the implementation of the Global Plan of Action, the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and other instruments to combat human trafficking.

65. With regard to international drug control, the delegation of Belarus welcomed the outcome document of the special session, which would further reinforce the international system of drug control. The Government supported the work of UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board aimed at enhancing international cooperation on countering illicit drug trade. In March 2017, at the sixtieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Belarus planned to introduce a draft resolution on strengthening the role of the family to prevent drug use among children and teenagers and hoped that the initiative would be met with broad support.

66. **Mr. Al Muhairi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the world drug problem had worsened; the number of drug users had increased, and new, more dangerous manufactured drugs had emerged. Drugs had become weapons in the hands of terrorist groups and were used to control young people and finance illicit activities. The international community must therefore continue to work together to protect societies and prevent youth from falling prey to traffickers and smugglers. National resources should be dedicated to promoting development and ensuring the welfare of citizens in a safe, stable and healthy society. Knowledge sharing was essential to the development of response mechanisms. In 2016, the United Arab Emirates had collaborated with other countries in the region to successfully intercept large amounts of drugs and narcotics. The Government had also implemented a number of controlled delivery operations in collaboration with destination countries and had taken part in an emergency meeting of heads of drug control agencies convened by the Gulf Cooperation Council to align plans and enhance coordination to counter and monitor drug trafficking organizations.

67. A number of prevention programmes had been established, targeting students in schools and universities in an effort to instil good citizenship and help them to resist bad behaviour. Treatment and rehabilitation programmes were provided to drug users.

with assurances of privacy. The United Arab Emirates fully honoured its commitments under all international drug-related conventions and would continue to work with Member States to address the drug problem and all of its dangerous consequences.

68. **Mr. Rabi** (Morocco) said that the special session and its outcome document would allow the international community to begin a new phase in the fight against drugs, which required concrete action, specific responses and an operational roadmap to address shared concerns. National and international strategies must be updated to meet the evolving challenges of the drug problem in the face of the growing drug culture, increased trafficking and consumption of drugs and the emergence of new psychoactive substances and new methods of consumption propelled by the Internet. The challenge of protecting societies and States from the devastating consequences of drugs was shared by all, and the international community therefore had an obligation to face it together.

69. Given its geographical position, Morocco was constantly faced with the problem of drug trafficking, compounded in recent years by the activities of transnational criminal organizations, which transported drugs across Africa through terrorist networks and insurrection movements, thereby threatening the peace and stability of much of the Sahel-Sahara region. The Government of Morocco dedicated significant financial and human resources to combating the criminal networks involved in smuggling and trafficking and to monitoring and controlling the country's borders and coastline.

70. Recently, the national security service and customs had undertaken clean-up operations in the Guerguerat area to put an end to smuggling and illicit trafficking. That operation had led to the confiscation of over 600 vehicles, thereby clearing the region of all forms of illicit trafficking and traffickers. In addition, the National Security Directorate had dismantled an international drug trafficking network with ties to members of the Frente Polisario. Four of its members had been arrested, including the son of the so-called Minister of Development of the pseudo-Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, and 500 kg of drugs intended to be smuggled across the eastern border had been seized. The four had admitted to being part of a vast

international drug trafficking network working along several channels between Morocco, Mauritania, Mali and areas under Frente Polisario control, thereby clearly establishing a link between drug traffickers in the Frente Polisario and active terrorist groups in northern Mali. One of the accused admitted to transporting several large shipments of drugs, receiving up to € 160,000 per tonne in return, and had implicated officials of the Frente Polisario in drug trafficking. Those officials had accepted sizable bribes in exchange for impunity for the many criminals operating in the territory controlled by the Frente Polisario.

71. The Government of Morocco was firmly committed to combating the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs, as well as addictive behaviour, and had adopted a comprehensive, balanced strategy based on prevention, care and combating trafficking and trafficking networks. Policies were designed to prevent addictive behaviour and targeted both the supply and demand of illicit products. The long-term goals of the plan of action were to progressively eradicate drug culture, encourage prevention and awareness, provide healthcare for drug users, implement alternative development programmes and reinforce regional and international cooperation.

72. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that, in regard to crime prevention and criminal justice, preventive policies, especially those that promoted social and economic development, respect for human rights and access to justice, should be central elements of strategies for crime control. Public policies aimed at eradicating poverty, improving education and health, empowering women and combating all forms of discrimination were essential for crime prevention, and in order to be effective, they must be elaborated and implemented with the participation of civil society.

73. Special attention must be paid to crimes against refugees. Brazil welcomed the recently adopted New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which recognized the vulnerabilities of those groups, particularly women and children. International cooperation should be further enhanced to prevent and combat unlawful practices that targeted refugees and migrants, such as human trafficking, modern slavery and sexual exploitation, and policies should be mindful of the victims' needs and perspectives. The nomination of Nadia Murad Basee Taha as Goodwill Ambassador

for the dignity of survivors of human trafficking drew special attention to the issue.

74. Adequate and effective punishment was essential to preventing and combatting crime, yet no crime warranted the application of the death penalty. The death penalty was not an appropriate instrument for public security policies, since there was no empirical evidence establishing a causal link between that penalty and effective crime control. Brazil encouraged all countries that still enforced the death penalty to adopt an immediate moratorium with a view to its abolition and called upon all Member States to constructively engage in the review of the relevant draft resolution.

75. With regard to international drug control, the Government was fully committed to the implementation of the outcome document of the special session, which acknowledged that drug-related policies must focus primarily on health and well-being and be formulated and implemented on the basis of scientific evidence, and take into account women and vulnerable groups.

76. Brazil looked forward to working with Member States to ensure a successful review of the resolution on international cooperation against the world drug problem, which was a fundamental step in the debate that would set the stage for the upcoming review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action in 2019.

77. **Ms. Mwangi** (Kenya) said that illicit drugs continued to present adverse health, environmental and socioeconomic effects, undermining security and development in developing nations such as Kenya. The Government had undertaken significant policy measures to effectively coordinate and implement its national drug control strategy. In 2015, it had revised the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act and strengthened the mandate of the National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse. As a member of the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group, Kenya worked to facilitate information sharing, counter transnational crimes and stem the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Proceeds of Crime and Anti-money-laundering Act, enacted in 2012, had established the Financial Reporting Centre to identify the proceeds of crime, money-laundering

and financing of terrorism. An advisory committee had been established under the Counter-trafficking in Persons Act to coordinate the efforts of key stakeholders. The Anti-corruption and Economic Crimes Act had established the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission. Additional laws were in place to protect victims of human trafficking, witnesses and whistle-blowers.

78. Despite those efforts, challenges still remained. The Government had heavily invested resources to combat transnational organized crime, which diverted much-needed resources from national development. Kenya's porous borders were exploited by human and drug traffickers, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons continued to empower terrorists and foment insecurity. The Indian Ocean was increasingly used by criminal networks as a transit route for illicit drugs, such as heroin and new psychoactive substances. Illicit trade in environmental resources and wildlife, especially in ivory and rhinoceros horns, had damaged biodiversity and devastated and endangered wildlife populations.

79. The Government of Kenya stressed the importance of effective subregional, regional and international cooperation through information sharing, joint investigations, mutual legal assistance and extradition in order to tackle the problems faced by transit countries. Support from UNODC and other partners had significantly enhanced national capacity to counter trafficking along borders and entry points and to address the drug problem and other transnational organized crimes. The international community must scale up resource mobilization for the delivery of technical assistance and capacity-building, particularly for developing countries.

80. **Ms. Sabja** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her country had attained political and financial autonomy in the fight against drug trafficking, demonstrating that it was possible to combat drug trafficking with its own financial resources and international commitments, and without conditions or impositions, military bases, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration or the shared responsibility of some drug-consuming countries.

81. The amount of land devoted to coca growing in Bolivia had been reduced by 35 per cent between 2011 and 2015 to a total area of 20,200 hectares, according to UNODC, and was now at its lowest level in

10 years. That reduction, the highest in the region, had been achieved with full respect for human rights and the environment and without any bloodshed, thanks to dialogue and a consultative approach, the delimitation of legal coca growing areas, the non-use of aerial fumigation or chemicals and with the participation of coca producers themselves. In the past 10 years, under President Evo Morales, cocaine seizures in Bolivia had tripled. In 2016, 121 tonnes of drugs had been seized in 7,000 operations. Despite those tangible results, and the recognition by the international community of the country's efforts to combat drug trafficking, in 2016 the United States Government had criticized those efforts, for purely political reasons unrelated to the issue.

82. At the seventeenth Summit of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, leaders had vigorously condemned the action taken by the United States under its Transnational Drug Trafficking Act of 2015, which included the implementation of extraterritorial measures, in violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Chewing the coca leaf was an ancestral practice of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon and part of the history and cultural identity of Bolivia. In order to defend that tradition, the Government sought multilateral and bilateral cooperation with friendly organizations and States that respected the country's sovereignty and human rights. The Government reiterated its firm political will to combat drug trafficking and illicit coca plantations and to apply the measures set forth in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

83. **Mr. Qassem Agha** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country was facing atrocious crimes and cruel and inhumane terrorism, based on an extremist Wahhabist ideology that glorified killing children, women and the elderly and rejected balanced ideologies. That ideology, which constituted a violation of the law, was supported by a group of armed criminals that had been formed and protected by States Members of the United Nations that pretended to have Syria's best interest at heart. Those terrorist groups conducted numerous criminal activities, including trafficking in persons, massacres of unarmed civilians and slavery of women and children. They targeted intellectuals and religious leaders and systematically destroyed and pillaged Syrian cultural heritage. The

archaeologist Khaled al-Asaad had been murdered after Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had destroyed the temple in Palmyra, a cultural crime that embodied the terrorist ideology of ISIL and the Al-Nusra Front, who targeted churches and historic monuments in order to destroy the past and terrorize innocents. The terrorists responsible for the destruction of monuments in Iraq and Syria, along with the Turkish intermediaries who facilitated pillaged goods being sold on European markets, must be punished. He called on the States supporting those mercenaries to respect their international commitments and adhere to Security Council resolutions 1624 (2005), 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014) by ensuring effective border controls and preventing the provision of financial support to those murderous criminals.

84. Terrorism was a crime that impacted all countries, and yet, the most egregious crimes were the policies of those States that opened their borders to terrorists and provided them with financial support and weapons. Humanitarian aid from Europe, Australia and other States was even used to transport arms for those terrorists. Massive numbers of Syrians who had been subjugated by terrorists were fleeing the irrational fatwas of those jihadists. The fatwas had played an important role in organized crime, in human trafficking, and in transnational crime, in organ trafficking on the borders. The humanitarian situation of hundreds of families had made them vulnerable to those crimes, perpetrated under the guise of humanitarian aid, while Syria's neighbours remained suspiciously silent.

85. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that the Holy See strongly shared the determination of the international community to tackle the world drug problem and actively promote a society free of drug abuse, in which all people could lead healthy lives, enjoy peace and live in social harmony. Drug trafficking and production obeyed the laws of supply and demand; drug trafficking existed because there was a lucrative market created by individuals addicted to illicit drugs. Preventing and fighting the consumption was key to preventing and fighting their production and trafficking. The Holy See was opposed to legalizing drug use as a means to fight drug addiction. The fight against drugs should be guided by the fundamental principles of respect for human dignity, of the primacy of prevention and the role of

the family as a bulwark for both drug prevention and addiction treatment.

86. Respect for the human dignity of all must be at the core of every international drug control and crime prevention strategy. Drug addicts must be treated with compassion and understanding. Numerous Catholic organizations and religious orders were active both in the fields of prevention and rehabilitation. Preventive measures started with educating children and young people to help them reject the temptation of illusionary bliss from drug consumption and the lure of easy money from drug trafficking.

87. The suffering of a drug addict engulfed the family and society as a whole. The Holy See strongly emphasized the importance of the family as the cornerstone of prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, reintegration and health strategies. Illicit drug abuse destroyed the social fabric of individual families and led ultimately to the destabilization of civil society. In addition, the Holy See supported programmes aimed at preventing risk factors by strengthening parenting skills.

88. **Mr. Barkan** (Israel) said that the unique needs and special challenges of women struggling with drug abuse were often overlooked, since most drug users were men. Gender-sensitive approaches to drug treatment were therefore crucial to successful recovery, and the outcome document of the special session had called for mainstreaming gender perspectives in drug-related policies and programmes. In Israel, separate treatment infrastructures had been developed for women because recovery in facilities serving both men and women could be difficult for female drug abusers who were also victims of sexual abuse, violence and trauma. The comprehensive treatment approach employed by Israel included trauma counselling and support, family and group therapy and other tools to cope with the issues faced by women, such as prostitution and motherhood. Facilities were also taking steps to create a separate space to provide women with additional opportunities to work, enjoy recreational activities and receive treatment apart from men. In addition, recovery centres had been established for young women and girls, including an ambulatory centre, residential centre, special clinics, post treatment recovery hostels, harm reduction programmes and inpatient detox units.

89. Israel was committed to sharing its experiences with other countries. In partnership with Israel's Anti-Drug Authority and UNODC, the Agency for International Development Cooperation under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted courses related to alcohol and drugs. The most recent course had focused on gender specific policies and programmes. The inclusion of a gender perspective in the fight against drug abuse was fundamental to ensuring equality for women. Women affected by drug abuse were more vulnerable, faced greater social stigma, were less likely to enter treatment programmes and had fewer opportunities to seek assistance and reintegration into society.

90. **Ms. Saem** (Maldives) said that globalization, information technology, international travel and transnational enterprises had advanced international efforts to address transnational and organized crime but had also allowed criminals greater flexibility and the opportunity to broaden their areas of operation.

91. Organized crime, such as drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and money-laundering, was a constant threat for the Maldives, a geographically dispersed island nation on one of the leading maritime trade routes. As a party to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supporting Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the Maldives had taken a number of significant steps towards its implementation. The Government had adopted laws to provide law enforcement authorities with the means to effectively combat trafficking of persons, money-laundering and terrorism financing. The national counter-terrorism centre, established in 2016, was designated the nodal agency to coordinate counter-terrorism efforts. The national strategy to counter violent extremism was based on moderate and progressive Islamic teachings, the empowerment of women and youth and increased preventive intervention by law enforcement and concerned government agencies. Safeguarding the tourism industry and tourists from terrorist attacks was also an important area of focus, and programmes were already underway to increase awareness of soft target security and enhance response mechanisms.

92. Measures adopted at the domestic level alone did not enable the Government to combat crimes

effectively. The Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, enacted in 2014, allowed the Maldives to cooperate with other States and international organizations to provide mutual legal assistance in relation to criminal offenses, including organized crime.

93. Without a fair, transparent and effective criminal justice system, efforts to combat crime would not be effectively realized. A comprehensive criminal procedure code had been enacted in 2016, paving the way for the guaranteed right to a fair trial by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal as established by law, equal access to justice with due process safeguards and the right to consult an attorney and an interpreter where needed. National drug policies and laws, underpinned by the principles of human rights and by a firm conviction for the need to build safer and just societies, not only provided stringent measures to combat drug trafficking, but also placed a strong emphasis on reintegrating drug dependent persons into society.

94. **Mr. Li Zhiqiang** (China) said that States must effectively implement the Doha Declaration of the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and intensify efforts to respond to new crimes, such as cybercrime and transnational telecom fraud. The Government of China supported the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security in carrying out its mandate and actively exploring the possibility of developing an international legal instrument within the framework of the United Nations to combat cybercrime. The Government also supported efforts to address wildlife crimes and illicit trafficking in cultural property.

95. States must have a zero-tolerance approach to corruption, effectively implement the Convention against Corruption, reinforce bilateral and multilateral cooperation and assistance, eliminate the political and legal obstacles to apprehending fugitives and recovering ill-gotten assets across borders and refuse to become havens for the corrupt and their assets. The implementation review mechanism of the Convention was a useful platform for promoting its implementation, exchanging experiences and strengthening capacity-building. In the second review cycle, all parties should

strictly follow the principles and rules of the review mechanism, including respect for the sovereignty of the States parties and non-interference in national affairs. While non-governmental organizations had a role to play at the domestic level, the review mechanism should remain an intergovernmental process. As the current President of the Group of 20, China had advocated for the G-20 High-Level Principles on Cooperation on Persons Sought for Corruption and Asset Recovery and the G-20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan 2017-2018.

96. China looked forward to the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. States should take proactive steps to apply the Convention, using it as a legal basis for judicial assistance, extradition and cooperation in recovering ill-gotten assets. An appropriate implementation review mechanism was needed, and the model, principles and experience of the review mechanism of the Convention against Corruption should be taken as a reference. The review mechanism should also uphold the intergovernmental, non-invasive and non-punishing nature of other reviews and prioritize international cooperation, recovery of assets and technical assistance.

97. In upcoming years, the international community should focus drug control efforts on implementing the outcome document of the special session. The Government of China supported the international drug control system based on the three international drug conventions and opposed legalizing drugs in any way. It also supported the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, UNODC and the International Narcotics Control Board. Drug control policies should not only safeguard and promote human rights, but also take into consideration the peace and security, well-being and common interests of society as a whole. States were entitled to formulate those policies, including criminal justice policies, as best suited their specific national circumstances.

98. **Mr. Lambertini** (Italy) said that the international community recognized that effective crime prevention and criminal justice were fundamental to peace and development and to the realization of human rights. International declarations and programmatic documents stated that human rights policies should

complement actions to counter criminal activities, which heightened tensions and accentuated divisions to the detriment of the least fortunate, draining public resources and violating fundamental rights and freedoms.

99. Italy would once again facilitate the resolution on crime prevention and criminal justice in order to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime. In 2015, Italy had coordinated with Jordan on a project to protect cultural heritage and had discovered that much remained to be done in order to transform the resolutions adopted by the international community into concrete, coordinated and effective actions. Similar shortcomings could also be found in efforts to combat trafficking in persons, drug trafficking, the arms trade, terrorist propaganda and the recruitment and sexual exploitation of children, youth and women. The contributions of all Member States would help to improve the resolution and ensure that it did a better job of pinpointing responses to illegal activities, taking into account the recent work done by organizations based in Vienna and Geneva, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Convention against Corruption and the special session.

The meeting rose at 1 05 p.m.

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Seventy-first session

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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 6 October 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Mejía

(Colombia)

Contents

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)

Agenda item 107: International drug control (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

Agenda item 106: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/71/94, A/71/96, A/71/114, A/71/119, A/71/120 and A/71/121)

Agenda item 107: International drug control (*continued*) (A/71/316)

1. **Mr. Perera** (Sri Lanka) said that the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem agreed to at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem was a laudable achievement and represented an ambitious way forward.

2. Sri Lanka had enacted comprehensive legislation to implement the multiple international and regional conventions to which it was party, which had been complemented since 2005 by its national policy on drug control. The Government worked closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), other United Nations entities and civil society in combating drug-related problems. The challenge in Sri Lanka was not the production, but the trafficking of drugs, and the increase in heroin consumption. Measures had been taken to establish a centre for sharing intelligence on drug trafficking among South and South-East Asian nations and to provide residential treatment and rehabilitation services for drug dependent persons. Laws had also been passed enabling judges to prescribe treatment for drug offenders in lieu of punishment. The overall goal was to reduce both the use and supply of drugs to minimum levels by 2020 through a broad approach that addressed the links between drug abuse, poverty reduction, crime prevention and health. Given the international dimension of the drug problem, however, no State could combat it alone. The fight required cooperation and coordination among countries and international organizations.

3. **Mr. Castañeda Solares** (Guatemala) said that public institutions in Central America were under constant threat from well-armed organized crime groups. The cure should not be worse than the disease, but the focus on crime prevention consumed significant public resources and diverted attention away from other social needs. In Guatemala the problem was hampering the consolidation of the country's

democratic institutions as well as its development. Caught between producer and consumer countries, countries like Guatemala were assuming a disproportionate burden of the fight against drug trafficking. The links between drug trafficking, organized crime, arms trafficking and money laundering posed major challenges that called for integrated approaches to be adopted at all levels to reduce the social costs involved. At the same time, proportionality in law enforcement, alternatives to imprisonment for misdemeanours, and special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable must be pursued.

4. The outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem marked a major step forward in three key respects: human health and wellbeing were reaffirmed as the goal of international drug control conventions, which encouraged a public-health response rather than a merely punitive one; it was agreed that drug policies should be person- rather than substance-focused, in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and it was acknowledged that international conventions allowed countries to adopt the policies they deemed appropriate for their situations. One of the key changes required in current drug policy was to prioritize the reduction of demand rather than just the supply.

5. The outcome document had reflected the need for a new declaration to reflect new realities: the momentum generated by the special session must now be maintained, and the United Nations must continue to provide guidance on the matter. No country could tackle the drug problem alone.

6. **Mr. Ayad** (Iraq) said that the independence of the judiciary in his country promoted respect for criminal justice principles, strengthened the rule of law and facilitated efforts to combat crime. Iraq had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2009 and was also a party to most regional and international instruments in that area. To promote the reintegration into society of persons convicted of minor offences, Iraq had enacted an amnesty law in 2016 and, to ensure that the rights of victims of crimes were upheld, had amended the country's code of criminal procedure. Furthermore, in line with its obligations pursuant to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and stemming from its belief that corruption undermined trust in State

institutions, hindered development and prevented the poor from accessing basic services. Iraq had established an independent unit on integrity that was subject to parliamentary oversight to prevent and combat corruption and promote transparency at all levels of Government.

7. Terrorists belonging to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued to perpetrate the most heinous crimes in Iraq, including murder, torture, trafficking in persons, and acts of terrorism that targeted markets, schools and factories. ISIL terrorists were also involved in money laundering and the looting of and illegal trade in antiquities. Iraq had drawn attention in numerous forums to the dangerous links between terrorism and organized crime, and had welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolutions 2195 (2014) and 2199 (2015), which had strengthened the international legal framework for combating the financing of terrorism and had highlighted the increasingly strong relationship between transnational organized crime and terrorism.

8. UNODC was providing Iraq with technical assistance and helping to train Iraqis working with the country's law enforcement authorities. Iraq would continue its efforts to combat all criminal activity, including by ISIL terrorist gangs, and, in that connection, underscored that the most significant form of crime was terrorism, which threatened peace and security, impeded sustainable development and economic activity, and undermined good governance and the rule of law. Iraq thanked the organizations and friendly countries that were supporting its efforts to uphold the rule of law and human rights, and called on all States to strengthen their cooperation so that they could more effectively combat all forms of criminal activity, including terrorism-related crimes.

9. **Mr. Bunyaritthipong** (Thailand) said that combating human trafficking remained a priority in Thailand. Stronger measures were being taken in accordance with the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and other relevant protocols. More effective law enforcement had led to a rise in the prosecution of traffickers, and gender and victim-sensitive considerations had been mainstreamed into criminal procedures. Under its prevention strategy, the Government was raising awareness of the risks of trafficking and investing

heavily in development to improve the quality of life of persons at risk, especially underprivileged women in rural areas. It was also working closely with the private sector, which was benefiting from the reduction of corruption costs in supply chains, and continued to promote the notion that respect for human rights was good for business.

10. Fair treatment of offenders was at the heart of criminal justice system. The Penitentiary Act had been brought into line with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules) and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules). The national strategy to combat the drug problem covered prevention, suppression, treatment and rehabilitation, as well as social reintegration and alternative development initiatives to address poverty and lack of opportunity, two of the root causes.

11. Crime prevention and international drug control benefited from the involvement of all sectors in inclusive partnerships that generated synergies. Data collection, capacity building and financial resources were also important. Thailand thanked UNODC for its active role in building capacities and providing guidance for the implementation of international legal instruments to combat drugs and crime.

12. **Mr. Ong** (Singapore) said that Singapore's status as a major transport nexus and trans-shipment hub had made it particularly susceptible to transnational criminal activity and the Government had responded with strong measures. The Prevention of Human Trafficking Act served both to deter trafficking in persons and support the rehabilitation of victims. The Organised Crime Act of 2015, meanwhile, allowed law enforcement to target syndicates operating across jurisdictions and to confiscate assets obtained through organized criminal activity.

13. There was no one-size-fits-all approach towards addressing the drug issue. Singapore had adopted a comprehensive, balanced, sustained and tough approach to tackling drug supply and demand that included comprehensive rehabilitation services and was suited to its unique circumstances and norms. The overall objective was to protect individuals and families from the dangers of drugs, wean abusers off their addiction and protect regional security. Singapore

strongly supported the centrality of the three international drug control conventions and would implement the recommendations in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

14. To respond to the growing threat to cybercrime, Singapore had launched a cyber security agency in 2015 and signed memorandums of understanding with many countries to improve cooperation on the subject. Singapore had hosted the fourth INTERPOL-Europol Cybercrime Conference in September 2016 and would soon host the inaugural Singapore International Cyber Week as part of efforts to facilitate discussions with key stakeholders on potential areas for collaboration and contribute to the work of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security. Given the transnational nature of cyberattacks, Singapore hoped that the Group would make greater efforts to engage the views and inputs of the wider United Nations membership.

15. Singapore was an active participant in international processes, had acceded to key United Nations conventions on transnational crime and would continue to seek to deepen its cooperation with regional and international partners such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). As the host of the INTERPOL Global Complex for Innovation, Singapore was pleased to report that the Complex had strengthened the global presence of INTERPOL and enhanced its partnerships in Asia.

16. **Mr. Warraich** (Pakistan) said that the dynamics of the drug problem in producer, transit and target countries varied considerably and there were no one-size-fits-all solutions. Pakistan's geographical location had made it both a target and a transit country for the global opiate and cannabis trade. A robust, comprehensive legal and administrative framework had been put in place to counter the menace, while prioritizing treatment and rehabilitation, as well as reduction in demand. The sizeable seizures of illicit drugs recorded in the country, including 342 tons the previous year, and Pakistan's contribution to drug seizures globally were a testament to its accomplishments in combating drug trafficking.

17. Pakistan was concerned by the emerging trend in some parts of the world to legalize the use of illicit drugs. The approach was counterproductive: it would boost demand and ignite the supply chain with direct fallout in his region. The three existing United Nations drug control conventions should be treated as the repository of the core guiding principles for developing an international approach to combating drugs. The objective, after all, was to build a drug-free society, not a drug-tolerant one. Efforts should focus more on mustering resources to build the capacity of the prime target and transit countries, as the frontline in the war against narcotic drugs, according to the threat they faced and their core contributions to the cause.

18. Transnational organized crime manifested itself in different forms, including trafficking in persons and firearms, migrant smuggling and money laundering. Pakistan had become party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism, and a special financial monitoring unit had been set up in the State Bank to cooperate with other countries in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. Cooperation at the national, regional and international levels remained the key, and mechanisms such as the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and UNODC needed to be strengthened.

19. **Mr. Dahlwy** (Saudi Arabia) said that the unprecedented security challenges affecting many parts of the world underscored the need for all States to work more closely together to combat crime and strengthen their criminal justice systems. To that end, it was essential that they enhanced respect for human rights and the rule of law. Indeed, crime undermined the rule of law and impeded development. Reliable indicators were therefore needed so that States could assess the extent to which the rule of law was respected, the success of crime prevention strategies, and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, with a view to measuring progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

20. His country was making every effort to combat crime and strengthen its justice system, and was developing a justice sector that was capable of adapting to changing circumstances. Saudi Arabia called on States to share best practices in that area.

including the treatment of detainees and their reintegration into society and, in that regard, invited Member States to study the experience of the Prince Muhammad bin Naif Centre for Counselling and Care, which, through dialogue, was seeking to promote non-extremist views and behaviour among members of certain targeted groups.

21. Based on its Islamic conviction that all substances that endangered human life must be prohibited, Saudi Arabia made every effort to combat the use of illicit drugs. Numerous campaigns to raise public awareness of the dangers of drugs and their impact on individuals and society as a whole were carried out. They included an online training course designed by the National Project on Prevention of Drugs (Nebras) on ways to combat drugs, which had been taken by 30,000 Arabic speakers around the world.

22. Saudi Arabia was working closely with the international community to combat the illegal drugs trade, which was closely related to the financing of terrorism and, consequently, posed a threat to the security and political stability of States. His country was also striving to counter the actions of State sponsors of terrorism and criminal activity in the Middle East and beyond. Action taken to that end by Saudi Arabia included the sentencing of 12 members of the Lebanese terrorist militia known as Hizbullah and other entities linked to that militia, who had been involved in terrorist crimes across the Middle East.

23. In closing, he called on all Member States to redouble their efforts to address the threat posed by drugs and crime, and emphasized that the sovereign right of all States to establish their own legal systems and decide appropriate penalties for offences must be respected.

24. **Ms. Kupradze** (Georgia) said that crime prevention and effective criminal justice systems were essential for achieving safe, just and inclusive societies and promoting human rights. Over the previous decade Georgia had implemented several reforms as part of its commitment to public safety and the rule of law, and crime rates had fallen significantly as a result. The Criminal Code had been revised, in close cooperation with the European Union, to bring it into line with international standards on matters such as repeat offenders, insanity defences and errors of law or fact.

Anti-discrimination legislation had also been amended to criminalize any incitement of hatred that entailed an obvious, direct threat of violence.

25. Another major achievement was the development of a comprehensive policy framework for juvenile justice, which included a standalone juvenile justice code that expanded the alternatives to criminal prosecution and the sanctions available to judges to ensure that detention and imprisonment were only measures of last resort, as required under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments. Crime prevention centres and rehabilitation services for juveniles, as well as diversion, mediation and resocialization programmes, had also been established. In addition, standards for the institutions authorized to provide services to young persons in conflict with the law had been developed with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Several complementary projects had been implemented in cooperation with civil society and international organizations, including an e-book project, which provided one-year community service opportunities to young persons diverted from the criminal justice system to help them develop computer and literacy skills. Georgia remained committed to criminal justice reform and to placing prevention at the heart of its efforts in that area.

26. **Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, as a country on the frontline of the war against illicit drugs, the Islamic Republic of Iran had sustained huge losses of life and expended billions of dollars in order to deprive the merchants of death of the bulk of their illicit drugs and protect part of the global community from the evil of addiction. Around 4,000 Iranian law enforcement officers had lost their lives and 12,000 had been maimed in the country's relentless campaign to stem the flow of drugs. As a result, on average, over 80 per cent of global opium output and 40 per cent of global heroin and morphine output were seized in the Islamic Republic of Iran: 620 tons of illicit drugs had been seized in 2015 alone.

27. In parallel, the Government had implemented comprehensive programmes to reduce demand for drugs, which included prevention, harm reduction, treatment and rehabilitation services. The coverage of the prevention programmes and voluntary enrolment in harm-reduction and treatment services now stood at

40 per cent, one of the highest rates in the world. As a result, HIV transmission among intravenous drug users had fallen by 60 per cent. Under the Government's community-based approach, over 85 per cent of demand-reduction programmes were run by non-governmental and private organizations. To reduce the prison population, alternative punishment plans for those convicted of drug-related offences had been implemented, and harm-reduction and treatment services had been introduced in prisons.

28. The Iranian Government called for the adoption of a balanced and comprehensive strategy to combat illicit drugs that, away from political considerations, ensured the expansion of regional and international cooperation on the principle of collective and international shared responsibility. Unfortunately, the brunt of the burden was still mainly borne by transit countries like Iran. While drug traffickers with links to terrorist groups and organized crime targeted the fabric of Iranian society and stole its youth, the support provided by the international community had been negligible.

29. With regard to mechanisms, the three international drug control conventions, by virtue of their scope and flexibility, formed the bedrock of the international system to combat illicit drugs; and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and UNODC should continue playing the leading role in addressing the global drug problem.

30. **Mr. Saito** (Japan) said that the inclusion of a focus on crime prevention and criminal justice in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development had been an important achievement of the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. Japan would be hosting the Fourteenth Congress in 2020 and his Government looked forward to discussing its theme with Member States, UNODC and other stakeholders. Japan continued to play an active role in implementing the joint commitment adopted at the April 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. Countering the spread of synthetic drugs was highly important; his Government thus actively supported the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

31. As the 2016 chair of the Group of Seven, Japan was leading implementation of the action plan on countering terrorism and violent extremism released at

the Ise-Shima Summit. The Government had taken action to promote transparency and strengthen law enforcement cooperation to increase momentum in the global fight against corruption. Further capacity-building and enhanced international cooperation were needed to combat cybercrime. Fighting money-laundering and the financing of terrorists was crucial to suppress terrorism; in that connection, Japan followed the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, continued to improve its national legal systems and contributed to relevant international efforts.

32. **Ms. al-Khater** (Qatar) said that, undoubtedly, crime prevention and criminal justice efforts promoted peace and fostered sustainable development. Qatar believed it was important to monitor progress towards the attainment of the SDGs and, to that end, had helped launch the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. States must strive to strengthen their criminal justice systems and to establish national societies and an international community governed by the rule of law and in which freedom and justice prevailed. In that regard, Qatar was proud to have hosted the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2015, which had concluded that crime prevention and criminal justice must be integrated into the wider United Nations agenda in order to address social and economic challenges and promote the rule of law at the national and international levels.

33. In line with its obligations pursuant to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, Qatar had established an independent national committee on integrity and transparency. Corruption and money laundering were perceived as being much less prevalent in her country than in other States in the region. Qatar had also provided financial support to facilitate the activities of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and had helped to convene the fourth Arab Forum on Asset Recovery in 2015. Qatar had ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, was a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, and had adopted legislation to combat that phenomenon and protect victims and witnesses who testified against

traffickers. Qatar also sponsored awareness-raising and monitoring programmes to help combat illegal drug use, and collaborated with relevant stakeholders throughout the region and beyond in investigations into drug-related criminal activity. Her country also took part in regional and international capacity-building and knowledge-sharing initiatives. Qatar would continue its efforts to implement the outcomes of the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and its collaboration with UNODC with a view to fostering the creation of safe, drug-free, just and peaceful societies.

34. **Mr. Almabruk** (Libya) said that worsening levels of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion were exacerbating illegal drug-related criminal activity and corruption in many parts of the world, while many countries' weak security and oversight authorities and their limited capacity to address those challenges would undoubtedly lead to further economic, social and political instability. Robust regional and international cooperation was needed to combat the global drug problem, and many States would require sustainable and predictable technical, financial and capacity-building assistance if they were to play an effective role in that regard.

35. The adverse effects of drug use, which included the spread of HIV/AIDS, meant that it was crucial for States to redouble their efforts to combat that disease, bring the perpetrators of drug-related crimes to justice, raise public awareness of the health risks posed by illegal drugs and provide support to dedicated treatment centres.

36. Further efforts were also needed to combat transnational crime and trafficking in persons, which was undermining the security and stability of many societies and impeding development. Libya was seeking to enhance its collaboration with neighbouring countries with a view to combating transnational crime and trafficking and called for the effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the regional conference on border security that had been held in Tripoli in 2012. Libya also urgently required further technical and capacity building assistance from UNODC to facilitate its compliance with relevant United Nations conventions and agreements. Libya looked forward to the re-opening of the UNODC subregional programme

office for the Maghreb countries in Tripoli and the resumption of its activities there at the earliest opportunity.

37. **Mr. Teffo** (South Africa) said that combating the increase in illicit trafficking in wildlife and forest products had become a major global priority. The outcomes of the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora were commendable, as was the African rhino range States' new conservation plan, which was designed to tackle poaching and increase the rhinoceros population across the continent. Governments must ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants did not threaten their survival.

38. The launch of Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants in September 2016 in Pretoria underlined his country's commitment in that area. His Government welcomed the new global programme to address prison challenges through implementation of the Nelson Mandela Rules, which would contribute to ensuring prisoners' humane treatment.

39. His Government strongly supported the implementation of the three international drug control conventions and the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. It was working to reduce alcohol and substance abuse through a national drug plan for the period from 2013 to 2017.

40. **Mr. Bultrikov** (Kazakhstan) said that effective crime prevention and criminal justice institutions were essential for the establishment of the rule of law, peace, progress and prosperity; and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16. His Government was currently instituting reforms designed, inter alia, to improve the transparency, accessibility and efficiency of the judicial system, hold law enforcement bodies more accountable and reduce corruption. It had updated its criminal legislation and its justice system to make them more humane and pragmatic, as well as opening a restorative justice institute and granting an amnesty for certain crimes. As a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, Kazakhstan advocated for the elimination of trafficking and the protection of its victims.

41. Member States should implement the measures outlined in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on countering the world drug problem. His Government remained committed to addressing the problems caused by narcotic drugs, including through putting into effect the recommendations contained in the 2016 World Drug Report. Kazakhstan participated in the regional and international programmes of UNODC through the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, which had significantly improved cooperation between national and regional law enforcement agencies, and a project on the control of shipping containers in the port of Aktau. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to contribute to international efforts to rid the world of transnational crime, corruption and illicit trafficking in drugs and people.

42. **Mr. Mendoza-García** (Costa Rica) said that the April 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem represented the beginning of a vital shift away from repressive policies and the war-on-drugs approach. However, while the outcome document, with its inclusion of provisions on human rights and a health-based approach, was a good point of departure, it was missing certain essential elements. A comprehensive strategy must incorporate new approaches to the drug problem, harm reduction, proportional punishments, non-applicability of the death penalty, analysis of policy effectiveness and the establishment of a panel of experts to provide strategic guidance. It was also imperative to redress the exclusion of the most vulnerable groups in society, such as people of African descent, indigenous people and people of diverse sexual orientation, by ensuring their participation in policy development.

43. Costa Rica had always taken a health-based approach to drugs. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to preventing the transmission of HIV and other diseases associated with drug abuse. It had recently reformed its criminal legislation to allow for reductions in the sentences of women considered vulnerable. No country was capable of effectively addressing such a transnational problem in isolation, however. International cooperation, including reciprocal legal assistance, was fundamental. The joint EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs and the Cooperation Programme between Latin America and the European Union on Drug

Policies were good examples. The recent help from the United States Government in equipping the Costa Rican authorities to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime was appreciated. In order to meet the targets set for 2019, concrete actions in support of egalitarian, inclusive and sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda were needed.

44. **Mr. Uğurluoğlu** (Turkey) said that Turkey had intensified its border protection measures to combat human trafficking. However, security measures could yield only a temporary and partial solution while the root causes of migration, including conflicts, human rights violations and economic deprivation in origin countries, went unaddressed. His Government had reinforced existing measures to prevent the illegal transfer of cultural property from its country of origin in response to increasing incidences of such illicit transfer, and of destruction of cultural property. The relevant authorities were also heightening their vigilance to prevent the removal of historical artefacts from Turkey. The link between terrorism and transnational organized crime must be addressed. His Government's long battle against terrorism had demonstrated the need for effective international solidarity and cooperation.

45. The world drug problem must be approached comprehensively. Turkey contributed to bilateral and multilateral efforts to fight drug abuse and trafficking, in addition to providing training to the personnel of many national law enforcement agencies. Through its national drug strategy for the period from 2013 to 2018, his Government sought to provide a balanced, effective and coordinated approach to demand and supply issues. The recommendations that had emerged from the recent special session of the General Assembly constituted a valuable road map; his delegation looked forward to working to achieve the targets set for 2019.

46. **Mr. Adeoye** (Nigeria) reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the outcome document of the 2016 special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and called for an integrated, multi-dimensional and balanced approach to the implementation of the three

international drug control conventions, in line with the 2030 Agenda.

47. His Government had passed a law in 2015 to improve the efficiency of the national criminal justice system, amended its extradition law and brought its national legislation into compliance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The Government had also strengthened the national drug law enforcement agency and, in collaboration with the European Union and UNODC, developed a comprehensive national drug control plan for the period from 2015 to 2019, and strengthened preventive drug education for primary-school-age children.

48. Nigeria would continue to work with other stakeholders to ensure that stolen assets and funds were returned to their countries of origin, and his Government strongly hoped that the international community would remain engaged with those important efforts.

49. The use of West Africa as a transit channel for illicit drugs had led to security challenges, including transnational organized crime, which threatened the very existence of some countries in the region. The recently launched regional programme to address illicit drug trafficking and organized crime in West Africa, developed by UNODC and the Economic Community of West African States, was therefore welcome. Law enforcement cooperation must be strengthened at the international, regional and national levels. Capacity building and technical assistance were key to the installation of efficient criminal justice and transnational drug control systems.

50. **Mr. Bolhasan** (Brunei Darussalam) said that cooperation between countries to address the world drug problem was essential, yet Member States' freedom to establish policies that suited their individual needs must be respected. Brunei Darussalam had a zero-tolerance approach to drugs. Its successful supply and demand reduction strategy resulted in only 0.14 per cent of the population using illicit drugs annually. Raising public awareness was key to building resilient, drug-free communities. Brunei Darussalam had treatment and rehabilitation centres that supported the reintegration of drug users into the community, including by helping them to find employment. His Government stood with the other ASEAN nations in support of a drug-free ASEAN and reaffirmed its

commitment to the implementation of the three international drug conventions, as well as its support for the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the recommendations that had emerged from the 2016 special session of the General Assembly. As efforts to achieve drug-free societies were part of a broader attempt to promote health, security and well-being, it would continue to treat drugs as a national priority and to cooperate with the United Nations to address the world drug problem.

51. **Mr. Umetaliyev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that the continuing use of central Asia as a route for transporting drugs between Afghanistan and the eastern European market worsened local crime and drug addiction rates, as well as hindering sustainable development in the region.

52. The expansion of the transnational drug trade had become increasingly aggressive. To prevent its growth at a national level, Kyrgyzstan had a Government anti-drug programme and a plan for its implementation, developed in conjunction with its national security concept and its sustainable development strategy for the period to 2017. Accordingly, in the first six months of 2016, Kyrgyz law enforcement authorities had uncovered 8 per cent more drug-related crimes than in the same period in 2015, as well as seizing almost 65 per cent fewer narcotic drugs in the first six months of 2016 than in the equivalent period of 2015.

53. The evolution of the drug situation and other challenges called for increased international cooperation. Kyrgyzstan was an active member of several regional organizations, as well as the International Drug Enforcement Conference, in cooperation with its partners in the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the International Narcotics Control Board. Furthermore, on the basis of bilateral agreements, closer cooperation with the relevant bodies of a number of countries was taking place to combat drugs.

54. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan continued to participate as a member of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre, while also cooperating with the UNODC Programme for Central Asia for the period from 2015 to 2019 and its Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries. Kyrgyzstan also continued to work with Afghanistan and

Turkmenistan to suppress cross-border routes for drug transportation.

55. **Ms. Gebrekidan** (Eritrea) said that her country had taken steps to improve access to its national justice system, including by establishing and expanding community courts. The Government had also put in place new penal and civil codes and their related procedures, which were the product of extensive study of Eritrean customary laws and took into account Eritrea's international commitments.

56. Work was ongoing to improve Eritrea's prison system, including rehabilitation facilities where inmates could receive formal and vocational training. Eritrea was actively cooperating with UNODC to enhance its capacity to combat human trafficking, as well as discussing cooperation to strengthen crime prevention and the criminal justice system and address violence against women and children.

57. As a country affected by human trafficking and smuggling, Eritrea had established legal, institutional and administrative frameworks to protect its nationals from criminal networks. In addition, an anti-money laundering proclamation had been introduced and border security initiatives had been taken. At the regional level, Eritrea had recently organized a workshop to engage and share experiences with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

58. In order to effectively tackle irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling, Eritrea had joined forces with transit and destination countries, as well as regional and international bodies. It had also submitted a project proposal to address human trafficking as part of its involvement with the African Union Commission Initiative against Trafficking in Human Beings and the Khartoum Process. Mass media and community meetings in all administrative districts were increasing public awareness of those crimes and the role of society in prevention and response. Economic and political projects were also being implemented to address the underlying causes of migration.

59. Certain European countries granted automatic asylum status to Eritrean nationals, which had encouraged many Eritreans to risk their lives in search of higher living standards. Although many Eritrean nationals continued to be exposed to human traffickers and smugglers, increased engagement with European

destination countries had facilitated an objective assessment of the situation and resulted in the rectification of approaches to irregular migration.

60. **Mr. Bouassila** (Algeria) said that efforts made by the international community to complement the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control for the period from 2013 to 2017 would enhance the achievement of that Plan's objectives, as well as the goal of a drug-free continent under the African Union's Agenda 2063. In that regard, implementation of the recommendations of the 2015 meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies would strengthen regional cooperation in order to effectively counter the world drug problem.

61. As a transit country, Algeria was concerned by the weakness of existing policies on limiting the supply of drugs. Decriminalizing the use of drugs, particularly cannabis, was a retreat from the gains achieved in previous decades. At the national level, Algeria was therefore implementing a strategy to strengthen the role of civil society in raising awareness of drug-related risks and to recognize drug use as a health problem. With regard to the connections between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, including in connection with the financing of terrorism, the Algerian legal framework had been updated and specialized judicial entities had been established to investigate those areas, in addition to a legal framework for witness protection.

62. Furthermore, in order to combat trafficking in persons, Algeria would strengthen its legislative and institutional measures to support the victims of trafficking, in accordance with existing international instruments. With regard to terrorism, the Algerian strategy for combating violent extremism was based on a high level of mobilization and vigilance by all security forces to protect public order and the safety of all people and property, as well as the implementation of a comprehensive deradicalization policy combining political, economic, social, cultural and religious measures.

63. **Mr. Mahmaminov** (Tajikistan) said that, like other States bordering Afghanistan, his country was on the frontline of combating drug trafficking. Tajikistan therefore paid particular attention to strengthening and developing international cooperation and promoted initiatives aimed at the joint and coordinated action of

all interested countries and international organizations. The international community must coordinate measures aimed at reducing drug demand and supply, and integrate efforts undertaken at the national and regional levels into the international strategy for narcotics control.

64. In order to respond effectively to the world drug problem, a global multilevel system of international cooperation should be established with the United Nations as a coordinating centre. In that regard, and on the basis of its own experiences, Tajikistan had developed an anti-narcotics strategy that included short-term and long-term action programmes, as well as collaboration and cooperation on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The Drug Control Agency under the President of Tajikistan continued its work, while anti-narcotic interactions with neighbouring countries had been developing efficiently.

65. In addition, a national strategy on combating illicit drug trafficking in Tajikistan in the period between 2013 and 2020 aimed to significantly reduce the illicit distribution of narcotic drugs and their non-medical use, to reduce the scale of the consequences of their illicit trafficking for health, safety, society and State security, as well as to expand international cooperation. Measures taken by the Government of Tajikistan had created the conditions for reducing the number of drug-related crimes, while joint measures taken by the Government, donor countries and international organizations had contributed to drug control programmes and enhanced cooperation.

66. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that his country had enacted a Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act in line with international conventions and protocols, as well as being a party to several anti-terrorism instruments which were being fully implemented. To combat the emerging challenges of transnational crime, Nepal had enacted effective laws on mutual legal assistance and the elimination of organized crime and money laundering.

67. At the national level, the Nepalese Government was implementing a number of drug control policies and strategies, as well as directives for the operation of rehabilitation centres and guidelines on oral substitution therapy for drug users. A national coordination committee for drug abuse control

reviewed the implementation of relevant legal instruments, while seventy-five district committees acted as local enforcement units. At the regional level, Nepal continued its work as a party to the Colombo Plan.

68. **Mr. Oppenheimer** (Netherlands) said that, despite the success of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, greater efforts were needed in addressing restricted access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, ensuring proportionate sentencing and exploring alternatives to incarceration and health-based intervention options.

69. However, local and national practices that had not been recognized in the outcome document of the special session, such as stronger support for evidence-based drugs policies, must be acknowledged. It was regrettable that the outcome document had not addressed the death penalty, despite many countries taking steps to reduce the number of offences for which capital punishment could be imposed. Extra-judicial killings, furthermore, were a flagrant violation of the right to life.

70. His delegation welcomed the focus on implementation of the recommendations from the special session, which should involve such United Nations entities as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as well as civil society.

71. **Mr. Thein** (Myanmar) said that his country continued to implement the Country Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on Myanmar and the Partnership Against Transnational Crime through Regional Organized Law Enforcement. In order to combat human trafficking, Myanmar was enhancing regional cooperation and using regional and national action plans to focus on policy, protection, prevention, prosecution and reintegration. In addition, a 2005 law against trafficking in persons was being updated. In cooperation with international partners and other stakeholders, Myanmar would continue to strengthen anti-trafficking measures with regard to the United States Department of State's 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report.

72. Drug control should focus on effective law enforcement and the justice system and should take a

multisectoral approach including such factors as public health, social improvement and human rights. At the national level, Myanmar had been implementing the fourth phase of its five-year drug elimination programme, part of a fifteen-year national plan. Furthermore, with technical assistance from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Myanmar had been undertaking drug abuse control measures alongside China, Laos, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Bilateral agreements with a number of countries in the region on the control and suppression of drug abuse and drug trafficking remained in place.

73. Efforts to eradicate opium continued through educating poppy farmers with the aim of reducing cultivation, while development projects enabling the farmers to generate alternative sources of income had been introduced. As poppies were generally grown in areas lacking essential infrastructure and facing food shortages, it was vital to fulfil the socio-economic needs of the people living in those areas.

74. Treatment and rehabilitation for drug users was provided at a number of centres, including methadone maintenance clinics and youth rehabilitation centres. Campaigns had been launched to encourage use of those centres. Furthermore, the consequences of illicit drug use were addressed in the national life skills curriculum to raise awareness among school students. Media campaigns, public talks, exhibitions and essay competitions were continuously carried out in schools and in communities across Myanmar through Government efforts and in cooperation with various United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and local partners.

75. **Ms. Yparraguirre** (Philippines) said that the country's development efforts had been impeded by pervasive corruption, worsening crime and prevalent drug abuse, all of which were interconnected. A significant number of villages were affected by the drug menace, with almost 3 million drug users in need of assistance. A police campaign had resulted in the seizure of an estimated \$73 million worth of illegal drugs, and 700,000 people had submitted themselves to the authorities for intervention and rehabilitation. The drive to eliminate the drug trade and other corrupt practices from the Philippines was fully compliant with the rule of law and due process.

76. The Philippine Government also sought to protect the 10 per cent of its population working abroad as migrants, and had established a comprehensive regulatory support framework with international partners. The recently amended Migrant Workers and Anti-Human Trafficking Act strengthened measures to protect migrants from maltreatment abroad and facilitate transnational assistance to victims and the pursuit of perpetrators. The Inter-Agency Council against Human Trafficking had been created to oversee law enforcement and the implementation of anti-trafficking initiatives, with 46 human trafficking convictions obtained in 2015.

77. **Mr. Tituaña Matango** (Ecuador) said that the conventional international strategy for solving the world drug problem had been unsuccessful as the supply of illegal drugs would always exist while there was demand, which was highest in developed countries. An estimated 90 per cent of the proceeds of the illicit drug trade were laundered in Northern banks, yet the countries in the South suffered most from the prohibitionist drug policy and were listed as money-laundering sites. Ecuador called for new approaches to replace the existing punitive model, and for countries in which drug consumption was highest to accept their role in perpetuating the problem. The international community also needed to address the problem of tax havens, which were associated with money laundering and the proceeds of criminal activity.

78. Ecuador reaffirmed the importance of shared responsibility and a coordinated, interdisciplinary approach in tackling the socioeconomic nature of the drug issue. The country's Preventive Alternative Development policy sought to ensure sustained and sustainable socioeconomic development in areas vulnerable to the cultivation or smuggling of drugs and related crimes. The national drug policy aimed to limit drug trafficking while also focusing on prevention and rehabilitation to prevent the marginalization of drug users. Indeed, the Constitution approached addiction as a public health issue. A combined effort was essential to prevent micro-trafficking. It was also crucial to centre drug policies around people rather than substances, and to guarantee human rights.

79. **Mr. Mohamed** (Sudan) said that, in accordance with its regional and international commitments, his country had enacted legislation and established

dedicated authorities to combat transnational organized crime, corruption and related crimes. It accorded particular attention to the situation of children in conflict with the law, and child protection units had been established in the police and armed forces. Sudan had also established a unit to combat all forms of violence against women, which was under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security, and had enacted legislation to combat human trafficking, particularly the trafficking of women and children. Furthermore, with the support of the African Union and the European Union, his country had hosted an international conference in 2014 on human trafficking and smuggling in the Horn of Africa and a follow-up conference had been held on that theme in Italy later that year. He called on donor countries to provide Sudan with the support it required to implement the outcomes of the two conferences. Sudan had also signed border control agreements with neighbouring States to strengthen its efforts to combat arms trafficking and the activities of organized criminal gangs and terrorists.

80. Sudan had adopted a national strategy on illicit drugs in 2015 and had also passed a number of related laws, including a law to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The country's financial investigations unit had been strengthened and Sudan had also streamlined the procedures by which the country dealt with extradition requests and could seize illicitly-gained financial assets. Sudan had also amended the law on combating illicit drugs and psychotropic substances to bring it into line with relevant international instruments and had adopted regulations to ensure that drugs were used appropriately in the medical field. Sudan had also taken steps to strengthen the relationship between citizens and the police in urban areas, which had led to a reduction of crime.

81. Lastly, he called on the international community to define terrorism as an international crime and adopt appropriate laws to combat that phenomenon. He underscored, moreover, that developing countries would require additional technical assistance in order to address the dangers posed by criminal activity and illicit drugs; that support must be provided as part of a comprehensive approach that also provided for the cancellation of developing countries' debts and the

lifting of the unilateral sanctions imposed on certain States.

82. **Mr. Barro** (Senegal) said that the fight against transnational organized crime had produced mixed results since Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) had identified the close connection between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, money-laundering, illegal arms trafficking, and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials. Human trafficking, corruption, cybercrime and counterfeiting were further threats requiring increased international cooperation, particularly between criminal justice systems, as transnational criminal gangs often escaped prosecution simply by crossing borders.

83. The delegation called for deeper cooperation to defeat the scourge of terrorism. A clearly stated national will and greater international cooperation were needed to safeguard the rule of law, democracy and human rights. With the support of UNODC, the West African subregion had developed programmes to strengthen cooperation on criminal justice matters in Western Africa and the Sahel and had set up prosecutor and judicial cooperation networks, which Senegal called on the international community and the main donor countries to support.

84. Senegal had implemented a number of measures to combat drug trafficking and related crimes and to improve national drug addiction treatment systems. The country had also ratified all human trafficking conventions and protocols, and had begun to transpose these into substantive law.

85. **Mr. Yaremchenko** (Ukraine) said that the illicit drug trade and organized crime were increasingly interconnected, and required a coordinated response from the United Nations system. The 2016 special session on the world drug problem was a milestone in international cooperation on the issue, but its outcome document must be put into practice with effective follow-up. A holistic, balanced approach should be pursued with full respect for human rights, seeking to reduce the social demand for drugs while enforcing drug laws to curb supply. It was important to prioritize prevention, treatment, drug harm reduction, rehabilitation, aftercare and social reintegration.

86. Ukraine appreciated the Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants launched in January 2016 and aimed at supporting strategy and policy development, legislative assistance, capacity-building, regional and transregional cooperation, protection and assistance to victims of trafficking. The ongoing conflict in Donbas was fuelling massive internal migration flows, which in turn was hindering Ukraine's implementation of legislation to combat human trafficking.

87. **Ms. Abdullah** (Malaysia) said that transnational crime required a more comprehensive approach, with stricter and enhanced enforcement, new legislation and greater inter-agency cooperation. Malaysia was committed to international, regional and bilateral agreements as well as United Nations General Assembly resolutions aimed at combatting transnational crime.

88. The country was pursuing a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to the drug problem by reducing demand and supply through measures including preventive education, introduction of voluntary treatment and rehabilitation, reintegration and crime prevention measures targeting drug kingpins and syndicates. Pledging to increase cooperation with regional and international stakeholders to share knowledge, expertise and best practices on drug prevention and treatment, Malaysia firmly believed that every government had the right to determine the best manner to address the drug problem in the unique circumstances of its society.

89. **Mr. Poveda Brito** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that Venezuela reaffirmed the principle of shared responsibility in addressing the world drug problem, even though countries were affected in different ways. The delegation stressed the need to further examine and tackle the key causes and elements of the drug issue without neglecting the concomitant health care and public safety consequences. To reduce both the supply of and demand for drugs, evidence-based measures were required that must be consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals. That called for a radical change in how the success of or progress in national drug policies was measured.

90. Venezuela was currently implementing its new National Anti-Drug Plan 2015-2019 to combat drug trafficking and related crimes. The PEN Online system

for issuing and responding to pre-export notifications allowed the government better supervision of international trade involving controlled chemicals. The capture of 134 citizens sought by Interpol for international drug trafficking between 2006 and 2015 demonstrated the country's commitment to international law enforcement cooperation. Venezuela rejected all international lists and certifications making specific and unilateral accusations against countries.

91. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that human trafficking, money laundering, drug trafficking and drug abuse were increasingly transnational problems threatening global security and development that required a concerted international approach. Bangladesh was a source and transit country for trafficking in persons and had passed a number of laws and regulations to combat the issue while also implementing other related processes. Welcoming the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted in September 2016, Bangladesh believed that the global compact on migration would provide the necessary framework for addressing the issues of all migrants.

92. Drug trafficking was a threat to socioeconomic development that required the active participation of all governments, societies and stakeholders. The Government of Bangladesh had been conducting a collaborative anti-drug campaign, providing drug addicts with treatment and rehabilitation, and strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies to tackle drug trafficking and abuse. Bangladesh had taken a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism and violent extremism, and had succeeded in dismantling domestic terrorist groups and cutting off their sources of regular funding while also flushing out regional operatives.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.